Roald Dahl

Die GSR

Die Groot Sagmoedige Reus



Illustrasies deur Quentin Blake

ROALD DAHL
The BFG (Big Friendly Giant)
Die GSR (Groot Sagmoedige Reus)
AFRIKAANS DEUR MAVIS DE VILLIERS
The characters in this book are:
HUMANS:
THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND
MARY, the Queen's maid
MR TIBBS, the Palace butler
THE HEAD OF THE ARMY
THE HEAD OF THE AIR FORCE
And, of course, SOPHIE, an orphan
GIANTS:
THE FLESHLUMPEATER
THE BONECRUNCHER
THE MANHUGGER
THE CHILDCHEWER
THE MEATDRIPPER
THE GIZZARDGULPER
THE MAIDMASHER
THE BLOODBOTTLER
THE BUTCHER BOY
And, of course, THE BFG
Persone in hierdie verhaal
Mense
DIE KONINGIN VAN ENGELAND MARY,
die Koningin se kamerbediende
MENEER TIBBS,
die hofmeester van die paleis
DIE HOOF VAN DIE LEËR
DIE HOOF VAN DIE LUGMAG
En natuurlik
SOPHIE,
'n weeskind
Reuse
DIE HOMPVLEISVRETER DIE BEENKNERSER
DIE MANNEKLEMMER DIE KINDKOUER
DIE SOUSDRUPPER
DIE AFVALVRETER
DIE VROUEKLOUER
DIE BLOEDSLURPER
DIE JAGTERSLAGTER
En natuurlik,
DIE GSR

1. THE WITCHING HOUR

Sophie couldn't sleep.

A brilliant moonbeam was slanting through a gap in the curtains. It was shining right on to her pillow.

The other children in the dormitory had been asleep for hours.

Sophie closed her eyes and lay quite still. She tried very hard to doze off.

It was no good. The moonbeam was like a silver blade slicing through the room on to her face.

The house was absolutely silent. No voices came up from downstairs. There were no footsteps on the floor above either.

The window behind the curtain was wide open, but nobody was walking on the pavement outside. No cars went by on the street. Not the tiniest sound could be heard anywhere. Sophie had never known such a silence.

Perhaps, she told herself, this was what they called the witching hour.

The witching hour, somebody had once whispered to her, was a special moment in the middle of the night when every child and every grown-up was in a deep deep sleep, and all the dark things came out from hiding and had the world to themselves.

The moonbeam was brighter than ever on Sophie's pillow. She decided to get out of bed and close the gap in the curtains.

You got punished if you were caught out of bed after lights-out. Even if you said you had to go to the lavatory, that was not accepted as an excuse and they punished you just the same. But there was no one about now, Sophie was sure of that.

She reached out for her glasses that lay on the chair beside her bed. They had steel rims and very thick lenses, and she could hardly see a thing without them. She put them on, then she slipped out of bed and tip-toed over to the window.

When she reached the curtains, Sophie hesitated. She longed to duck underneath them and lean out of the window to see what the world looked like now that the witching hour was at hand.

She listened again. Everywhere it was deathly still.

The longing to look out became so strong she couldn't resist it. Quickly, she ducked under the curtains and leaned out of the window.

In the silvery moonlight, the village street she knew so well seemed completely different. The houses looked bent and crooked, like houses in a fairy tale. Everything was pale and ghostly and milky-white.

Across the road, she could see Mrs Rance's shop, where you bought buttons and wool and bits of elastic. It didn't look real. There was

something dim and misty about that too.
Sophie allowed her eye to travel further and further down the street.
Suddenly she froze. There was something coming up the street on the opposite side.
It was something black …
Something tall and black …
Something very tall and very black and very thin.

1. Die toweruur

Sophie kan maar net nie aan die slaap raak nie.
’n Helder maanstraal streep deur ’n skrefie in die gordyn. Dit skyn reg op haar kussing.
Die ander kinders in die slaapsaal is al lankal in
droomland.
Sophie maak haar oë toe en lê doodstil. Sy doen haar bes om in te sluimer.
Maar dit help nie. Die maanstraal sny soos ’n silwer
lem regdeur die kamer tot op haar gesig.
Dis baie stil in die gebou. Sy hoor geen stemme van under af nie. Daar is geen voetstappe bokant haar kop nie.
Die venster agter die gordyn is wyd oop, maar sy
hoor niemand op die sypaadjie loop nie. Daar is geen motors op straat nie. Nêrens hoor sy selfs die geringste geluidjie nie. Sophie het nog nooit so ’n stilte ervaar nie.
Miskien, dink sy, miskien is dit nou die toweruur.
Die toweruur - so het iemand eendag in haar oor ge-fluister - is dié besonderse oomblik in die middel van die nag wanneer elke kind en elke grootmens dicp, diep slaap. Dan behoort die wêreld aan al die skadu-dinge wat uit hulle donker skuilplekke kruip.
Die maanstraal skyn ál helderder op Sophie se kussing. Sy besluit om op te staan en die gordyn dig toe te trek.
Eintlik word mens gestraf as jy saans ná ligte-uit uit
jou bed klim. Selfs kamerverlaat word nie as verskoning aanvaar nie. Maar daar is mos nie nou iemand wat haar sal sien nie! Daarvan is sy seker.
Sy tel eers haar bril op wat langs haar bed lê. Die bril het staalrame en baie dik lense. Daarsonder is sy so blind soos ’n mol. Sy sit die bril op haar neus, glip saggies onder die komberse uit en loop op haar tone venster toe.
Toe sy by die gordyn kom, huiwer sy. Sy wil tog so graag haar kop by die venster uitsteek, oor die vensterbank leun en kyk hoe die wêreld in die toweruur lyk.
Sy luister weer. Alles is dood-, doodstil. Sy kan haar
nuuskierigheid nie langer bedwing nie. Haar kop woeps deur die skreef in die gordyn en sy hang by die venster uit.
In die silwerige maanskyn lyk die dorpstraat wat sy so goed ken heel anders. Dit lyk nie meer soos Engeland nie. Die huise staan krom en skeef soos huise in ’n sprokiesverhaal. Alles is bleek, spookagtig en wasig wit.

Mevrou Rens se winkel oorkant die straat, waar 'n
mens knope en wol en stukkies rek kan koop, lyk soos
'n huis in 'n ou, verslete prenteboek, dof en mistig en half verbleik.
Sophie se oë dwaal verder en verder straat af.
Skielik word sy yskoud. Aan die oorkant van die straat kom iets aan.
Dis iets swarts …
Dis iets lanks en swarts …
Dis iets wat baie lank en baie swart en baie maer is.

2. WHO?

It wasn't a human. It couldn't be. It was four times as tall as the tallest human. It was so tall its head was higher than the upstairs windows of the houses. Sophie opened her mouth to scream, but no sound came out. Her throat, like her whole body, was frozen with fright.
This was the witching hour all right.
The tall black figure was coming her way. It was keeping very close to the houses across the street, hiding in the shadowy places where there was no moonlight.
On and on it came, nearer and nearer. But it was moving in spurts. It would stop, then it would move on, then it would stop again.
But what on earth was it doing?
Ah-ha! Sophie could see now what it was up to. It was stopping in front of each house. It would stop and peer into the upstairs window of each house in the street. It actually had to bend down to peer into the upstairs windows. That's how tall it was.
It would stop and peer in. Then it would slide on to the next house and stop again, and peer in, and so on all along the street.
It was much closer now and Sophie could see it more clearly.
Looking at it carefully, she decided it had to be some kind of PERSON. Obviously it was not a human. But it was definitely a PERSON.
A GIANT PERSON, perhaps.
Sophie stared hard across the misty moonlit street. The Giant (if that was what he was) was wearing a long BLACK CLOAK.
In one hand he was holding what looked like a VERY LONG, THIN TRUMPET.
In the other hand, he held a LARGE SUITCASE.
The Giant had stopped now right in front of Mr and Mrs Goochey's house. The Goocheys had a greengrocer's shop in the middle of the High Street, and the family lived above the shop. The two Goochey children slept in the upstairs front room, Sophie knew that.
The Giant was peering through the window into the room where Michael and Jane Goochey were sleeping. From across the street, Sophie watched and held her breath.
She saw the Giant step back a pace and put the suitcase down on the pavement. He bent over and opened the suitcase. He took something

out of it. It looked like a glass jar, one of those square ones with a screw top. He unscrewed the top of the jar and poured what was in it into the end of the long trumpet thing.
Sophie watched, trembling.
She saw the Giant straighten up again and she saw him poke the trumpet in through the open upstairs window of the room where the Goochey children were sleeping. She saw the Giant take a deep breath and whoof,he blew through the trumpet.
No noise came out, but it was obvious to Sophie that whatever had been in the jar had now been blown through the trumpet into the Goochey children's bedroom.
What could it be?
As the Giant withdrew the trumpet from the window and bent down to pick up the suitcase he happened to turn his head and glance across the street.
In the moonlight, Sophie caught a glimpse of an enormous long pale wrinkly face with the most enormous ears. The nose was as sharp as a knife, and above the nose there were two bright flashing eyes, and the eyes were staring straight at Sophie. There was a fierce and devilish look about them.
Sophie gave a yelp and pulled back from the window. She flew across the dormitory and jumped into her bed and hid under the blanket.
And there she crouched, still as a mouse, and tingling all over.
2. Wie?
'n Méns is dit nie. Dis nou maar klaar. Dis vier keer so lank soos die langste mens. Dis só lank dat die kop tot bokant die vensters van die dubbelverdiepinghuise strek. Sophie se mond gaan oop om te skree, maar sy kry geen geluid uit nie. Dis asof haar hele lyf van die skrik verlam is.
Ja-nee, dit is sowaar die toweruur!
Die lang, swart figuur kom stadig nader. Dit hou dig teen die huise aan die oorkant van die straat, verskuil in die donker kolle waar geen maanstraal kom nie.
Dit kom met rukke en stote nader. Soms gaan dit7
staan, loop dan vorentoe en gaan weer staan.
Wat op aarde vang die ding aan?
Wag! Nou kan Sophie beter sien. Voor elke huis gaan staan die ding en loer by die boonste vensters in. Eintlik moet dit afbuk om te kan inloer, so lank is dit.
Weer bly die ding staan, loer binnetoe, beweeg ver
der, gaan staan, loer binnetoe, al langs die een kant van die straat af.
Dit kom al nader en nader aan Sophie.
Noudat sy dit beter kan sien, besluit sy dat dit wel die een of ander lewende wese móét wees. Weliswaar nie 'n mens nie maar tog 'n per

soon.
’n Reuse-persoon, miskien.
Sophie tuur deur die neweligheid. Die reus - as dit wel ’n reus is - dra ’n lang swart mantel.
In die een hand hou hy ’n ding vas wat soos ’n baie
lang, dun trompet lyk.
In die ander hand dra hy ’n groot koffer.
Die reus het voor meneer en mevrou Green se huis gaan stilstaan. Die Greens het ’n groentewinkel en die gesin woon bokant die winkel. Die twee Green-kinders slaap in die voorste kamer, bó - dit weet Sophie.
Die reus loer deur die venster waar Jane en Michael
(ireen slaap. Sophie hou hom met ingehoue asem dop.
Sy sien hoe die reus agteruit tree en die koffer op die sypaadjie neersit. Hy haal iets daaruit - iets wat na ’n lies lyk, ’n groot glasfles met ’n skroefdeksel. Hy skroef die deksel versigtig af, gooi iets by die bek van die trumpet in en draai die deksel weer vinnig vas.
Bibberend van vrees wag Sophie.
Die reus kom vinnig orent. Hy steek die trompet deur die venster van die kamer waar die Green-kinders slaap. Hy haal diep asem en blaas op die trompet.
Sophie hoor geen geluid nie, maar sy weet dat dit wat in die trompet was, nou in die Green-kinders se kamer
moet wees.
Maar wat? En hoekom?
Toe die reus die trompet laat sak en buk om die koffer op te tel, draai hy sy kop na die oorkant van die straat.
In die maanlig sien Sophie ’n groot, lang, bleek, verrimpelde gesig met die grootste ore denkbaar. Die neus is so skerp soos ’n mes. Bokant die neus is daar twee blink, blitsende oë wat na haar gluur. Hulle is vol duiwels.
Verskrik spring Sophie van die venster af weg. Sy
nael oor die vloer, spring in haar bed en trek die komberse bo-oor haar kop.
En daar lê sy in ’n bondeltjie, stil soos ’n muis, en bewe.

3.THE SNATCH

Under the blanket, Sophie waited.

After a minute or so, she lifted a corner of the blanket and peeped out.

For the second time that night her blood froze to ice and she wanted to scream, but no sound came out. There at the window, with the curtains pushed aside, was the enormous long pale wrinkly face of the Giant Person, staring in. The flashing black eyes were fixed on Sophie's bed.

The next moment, a huge hand with pale fingers came snaking in through the window. This was followed by an arm, an arm as thick as a tree-trunk, and the arm, the hand, the fingers were reaching out across the room towards Sophie's bed.

This time Sophie really did scream, but only for a second because very quickly the huge hand clamped down over her blanket and the scream was smothered by the bedclothes.

Sophie, crouching underneath the blanket, felt strong fingers grasping hold of her, and then she was lifted up from her bed, blanket and all, and whisked out of the window.

If you can think of anything more terrifying than that happening to you in the middle of the night, then let's hear about it.

The awful thing was that Sophie knew exactly what was going on although she couldn't see it happening. She knew that a Monster (or Giant) with an enormous long pale wrinkly face and dangerous eyes had plucked her from her bed in the middle of the witching hour and was now carrying her out through the window smothered in a blanket.

What actually happened next was this. When the Giant had got Sophie outside, he arranged the blanket so that he could grasp all the four corners of it at once in one of his huge hands, with Sophie imprisoned inside. In the other hand he seized the suitcase and the long trumpet thing and off he ran.

Sophie, by squirming around inside the blanket, managed to push the top of her head out through a little gap just below the Giant's hand. She stared around her.

She saw the village houses rushing by on both sides. The Giant was sprinting down the High Street. He was running so fast his black cloak was streaming out behind him like the wings of a bird. Each stride he took was as long as a tennis court. Out of the village he ran, and soon they were racing across the moonlit fields. The hedges dividing the fields were no problem to the Giant. He simply strode over them. A wide river appeared in his path. He crossed it in one flying stride.

Sophie crouched in the blanket, peering out. She was being bumped against the Giant's leg like a sack of potatoes. Over the fields and hedges and rivers they went, and after a while a frightening thought came into Sophie's head. The Giant is running fast,she told herself, because he is hungry and he wants to get home as quickly as possible, and then he'll have me for breakfast.

3. Die ontvoering

Onder die komberse lê Sophie en wag.
Ná ’n paar benoude oomblikke waag sy dit om een hoekie van die kombers te lig.
Dit voel vir haar asof yswater deur haar are loop. Sy
probeer skree, maar sy kry nie ’n geluid uit nie. By die venster waar die gordyne nou wyd oop is, sien sy die lang, bleek, verrimpelde gesig van die reuse-persoon. Die blink, swart oë kyk stip na Sophie se bed.
’n Groot hand met bleek vingers kronkel deur die
venster. Dan volg ’n arm so dik soos ’n boomstomp en die arm, dié hand voel rond na Sophie.
Hierdie keer skree sy rêrig, maar dit help nie, want
oombliklik word die geluid gesmoor deur die kombers wat nou deur die groot hand om haar vasgeklem word.
Sophie voel hoe die sterk vingers die kombers vasvat,
haar van die bed oplig en vinnig deur die venster pluk.
As júlle kan dink aan ’n aakliger ondervinding in die middel van die nag, laat asseblief van julle hoor.
Die ergste van alles is dat Sophie presies wéét wat
gebeur, al kan sy niks sien nie. Sy wéét dat ’n monster - of reus - met ’n groot, lang, verrimpelde gesig en gevaarlik flitsende oë haar, nog steeds tocgedraai in haar kombers, in die toweruur uit haar bed pluk en by die venster uittel.
Toe die reus Sophie buite het, vou hy die kombers só dat hy al vier punte in sy een hand kan vashou. Natuurlik met Sophie binne-in. In sy ander hand klem hy die koffer en die trompet-affêre vas en maak dat hy wegkom.
Deur in die kombers rond te vroetel en te wikkel kry Sophie dit reg om haar kop deur ’n klein openinkie, net onderkant die reus se hand, te steek. En wat sal sy sien?
Die dorp se huise skuif vinnig verby. Nou hardloop die reus in Hoofstraat af. Hy hardloop so vinnig dat sy swart mantel soos ’n vlag agter hom wapper. Elke tree
wat hy gee, is so lank soos ’n tennisbaan. Die dorpie lê nou al ver agter hulle, en hy nael oor die maanverligte weilande. Heinings en drade is geen probleem nie. Hy trap eenvoudig bo-oor. ’n Breë rivier keer hom nie. Met een vlieënde tree is hy aan die ander kant.
Sophie, opgekrul in die kombers, kyk met verbasing
na die verbyflitsende tonele. Dis glad nie ’n gemaklike rit nie, want sy stamp soos ’n sak aartappels teen die reus se been. Hulle seil oor velde en heinings en riviere en ná ’n lang ruk begin Sophie allerhande nare

gedagtes kry. Die reus hardloop so vinnig, dink sy, want hy is hon-ger en zvil so gou moontlik by die huis kom om my op te eet.

4. THE CAVE

The Giant ran on and on. But now a curious change took place in his way of running. He seemed suddenly to go into a higher gear. Faster and faster he went and soon he was travelling at such a speed that the landscape became blurred. The wind stung Sophie's cheeks. It made her eyes water. It whipped her head back and whistled in her ears. She could no longer feel the Giant's feet touching the ground. She had a weird sensation they were flying. It was impossible to tell whether they were over land or sea. This Giant had some sort of magic in his legs. The wind rushing against Sophie's face became so strong that she had to duck down again into the blanket to prevent her head from being blown away.

Was it really possible that they were crossing oceans? It certainly felt that way to Sophie. She crouched in the blanket and listened to the howling of the wind. It went on for what seemed like hours.

Then all at once the wind stopped its howling. The pace began to slow down. Sophie could feel the Giant's feet pounding once again over the earth. She poked her head up out of the blanket to have a look. They were in a country of thick forests and rushing rivers. The Giant had definitely slowed down and was now running more normally, although normal was a silly word to use to describe a galloping giant. He leaped over a dozen rivers. He went rattling through a great forest, then down into a valley and up over a range of hills as bare as concrete, and soon he was galloping over a desolate wasteland that was not quite of this earth. The ground was flat and pale yellow. Great lumps of blue rock were scattered around, and dead trees stood everywhere like skeletons. The moon had long since disappeared and now the dawn was breaking. Sophie, still peering out from the blanket, saw suddenly ahead of her a great craggy mountain. The mountain was dark blue and all around it the sky was gushing and glistening with light. Bits of pale gold were flying among delicate frosty-white flakes of cloud, and over to one side the rim of the morning sun was coming up red as blood.

Right beneath the mountain, the Giant stopped. He was puffing mightily. His great chest was heaving in and out. He paused to catch his breath.

Directly in front of them, lying against the side of the mountain, Sophie could see a massive round stone. It was as big as a house. The Giant reached out and rolled the stone to one side as easily as if it had been a football, and now, where the stone had been, there appeared a vast black hole. The hole was so large the Giant didn't even have to

duck his head as he went in. He strode into the black hole still carrying Sophie in one hand, the trumpet and the suitcase in the other.

As soon as he was inside, he stopped and turned and rolled the great stone back into place so that the entrance to his secret cave was completely hidden from outside.

Now that the entrance had been sealed up, there was not a glint of light inside the cave. All was black.

Sophie felt herself being lowered to the ground. Then the Giant let go the blanket completely. His footsteps moved away. Sophie sat there in the dark, shivering with fear.

He is getting ready to eat me, she told herself. He will probably eat me raw, just as I am.

Or perhaps he will boil me first.

Or he will have me fried. He will drop me like a rasher of bacon into some gigantic frying-pan sizzling with fat.

A blaze of light suddenly lit up the whole place. Sophie blinked and stared.

She saw an enormous cavern with a high rocky roof.

The walls on either side were lined with shelves, and on the shelves there stood row upon row of glass jars. There were jars everywhere. They were piled up in the corners. They filled every nook and cranny of the cave.

In the middle of the floor there was a table twelve feet high and a chair to match.

The Giant took off his black cloak and hung it against the wall. Sophie saw that under the cloak he was wearing a sort of collarless shirt and a dirty old leather waistcoat that didn’t seem to have any buttons. His trousers were faded green and were far too short in the legs. On his bare feet he was wearing a pair of ridiculous sandals that for some reason had holes cut along each side, with a large hole at the end where his toes stuck out. Sophie, crouching on the floor of the cave in her nightie, gazed back at him through thick steel-rimmed glasses. She was trembling like a leaf in the wind, and a finger of ice was running up and down the length of her spine.

‘Ha!’ shouted the Giant, walking forward and rubbing his hands together. ‘What has us got here?’ His booming voice rolled around the walls of the cave like a burst of thunder.

4. Die grot

Steeds hardloop die reus. Maar sy manier van hardloop vcrander. Dit voel asof hy hom in ’n hoër rat gooi. Vinniger en vinniger jaag hy, totdat die landskap net ’n vaal streep is. Die wind brand Sophie se wange. Dit laat haar oë traan. Dit piets haar kop agtertoe en fluit om haar ore. Dit voel asof die reus se voete bo die aar-ile sweef. Dit voel of hulle vlieg. Dis onmoontlik om agter te kom of hulle bokant die land of bokant die see is. Hierdie reus het towerbene. Die wind swiep teen Sophie se gesig en word so sterk dat sy onder die kom bers moet inkoes sodat haar kop nie afwaai nie.

Is dit regtig moontlik dat hulle nou oor oseane vlieg? Dit voel vir Sophie beslis so. Opgekrul in die kombers luister sy na die geloei van die wind. Die reis hou net aan en aan.

Toe skielik huil die wind nie meer nie. Die pas raak stadiger. Sophie kan die reus se voete op vaste grond hoor trap.

Sy steek haar kop weer deur die openinkie.

Hulle is nou in ’n wêreld van digte bosse en bruisende riviere. Die reus beweeg ál stadiger tot hy teen ’n meer normale pas hardloop, al is normaal skaars ’n woord om die reus se galop mee te beskrywe. Hy spring oor tientalle riviere, hy ratel deur groot bosse, trap af in
’n vallei en bo-oor ’n heuwelreeks so kaal soos beton-blokke. Dan galop hy oor ’n verlate woestyngebied wat baie anders lyk as ons bekende wêreld. Die oppervlak is plat en geel. Blou rotsblokke lê rondgestrooi en oral
staan dooie borne wat soos geraamtes lyk. Die maan is al onder, en in die ooste breek die dag.

Sophie, wat nog steeds deur die gaatjie loer, gewaar skielik voor hulle ’n groot steil berg. Die berg is don-kerblou van kleur en reg rondom glinster en skitter die lig. Stukkies goud fladder tussen die yl, yswit wolkvlok-kies deur, en oor die kim kom die oggendson bloedrooi op.

Aan die voet van die berg gaan die reus staan. Hy hyg van inspanning. Sy bors stoot op en af. Hy wag lang ’n ruk om tot verhaal te kom.

Reg voor hulle, teen die hang van die berg, sien Sophie
’n yslike groot ronde rots lê. Die reus rol die rots son-der enige moeite weg, asof dit ’n voetbal is, en nou sien Sophie ’n groot swart gat in die berg. Die gat is so groot dat die reus nie eens hoef te buk nie. Hy loop, binnetoe met Sophie in die een hand en die koffer en trompet in die ander.Toe hy binne is, draai hy om en rol die rots weer voor die opening.

Dis pikdonker. Só donker en só swart dat Sophie tiiks kan sien nie.

Sy voel hoe sy op die grond neergesit word. Die reus ins die kombers.

Sy voetstappe klap weg.
Sophie sit daar in die nag-donkerte en bewe van die migs.
Hy maak nou klaar om my te eet, maak sy haarself
wys. Hy gaan my sommer rou eet, nes ek is.
Of miskien gaan hy my eers kook.
Of miskien wil hy my liewer braai. Hy sal my soos 'n
Niukkie spek in 'n reuse-pan laat val waarin die kokende vet so sis en spat!
Skielik word dit helder lig. Sophie knip haar oë en
kyk verbaas rond.
Sy sien 'n enorme grot met 'n hoë rotsplafon. Langs die mure staan rye en rye rakke, en op die rakke staan honderde en honderde glasflesse. In elke hoek, om elke draai staan daar flesse en nogmaals flesse.
In die middel van die grot staan 'n vier meter hoë ta
li-1 met 'n stoel wat daarby pas.
Die reus haal sy swart mantel af en hang dit netjies aan
'n haak teen die muur.
Onder die mantel dra hy 'n kraaglose hemp en 'n ou vuil onderbaadjie waarvan al die knope af is. Sy broek is liggroen en heeltemal te kort vir sy lang bene. Aan sy kaal voete dra hy 'n paar verspotte sandale wat gate al liings die kante het en 'n groot gat voor waardeur sy yslilce tone steek.
Sophie sit roerloos op die vloer en staar deur haar
staalraambril na hom. Sy klou haar nagjurk styf om haar vas. Sy bewe soos 'n blaar in die wind, en dit voel kompleet asof ysvingers teen haar ruggraat op en af kriewel.
"Ha!" skree die reus, tree vorentoe en vryf sy hande teen mekaar. "Wat het ekke hier?" Sy stem weergalm soos harde donderslae deur die grot.

5. The BFG

The Giant picked up the trembling Sophie with one hand and carried her across the cave and put her on the table.
Now he really is going to eat me, Sophie thought.
The Giant sat down and stared hard at Sophie. He had truly enormous ears. Each one was as big as the wheel of a truck and he seemed to be able to move them inwards and outwards from his head as he wished.
'I is hungry!' the Giant boomed. He grinned, showing massive square teeth. The teeth were very white and very square and they sat in his mouth like huge slices of white bread.
'P … please don't eat me,' Sophie stammered.
The Giant let out a bellow of laughter. 'Just because I is a giant, you think I is a man-gobbling cannybull!' he shouted. 'You is about right! Giants is all cannybully and murderful! And they does gobble up human beans! We is in Giant Country now! Giants is everywhere around! Out there us has the famous Bonecrunching Giant! Bonecrunching Giant crunches up two wopsey whiffling human beans for supper every night! Noise is earbursting! Noise of crunching bones goes crackety-crack for miles around!'
'Owch!' Sophie said.
'Bonecrunching Giant only gobbles human beans from Turkey,' the Giant said. 'Every night Bonecruncher is galloping off to Turkey to gobble Turks.'
Sophie's sense of patriotism was suddenly so bruised by this remark that she became quite angry. 'Why Turks?' she blurted out. 'What's wrong with the English?'
'Bonecrunching Giant says Turks is tasting oh ever so much juicier and more scrumdiddlyumptious! Bonecruncher says Turkish human beans has a glamourly flavour. He says Turks from Turkey is tasting of turkey.'
'I suppose they would,' Sophie said.
'Of course they would!' the Giant shouted. 'Every human bean is diddly and different. Some is scrumdiddlyumptious and some is uckyslush. Greeks is all full of uckyslush. No giant is eating Greeks, ever.'
'Why not?' Sophie asked.
'Greeks from Greece is all tasting greasy,' the Giant said.
'I imagine that's possible too,' Sophie said. She was wondering with a bit of a tremble what all this talking about eating people was leading up to. Whatever happened, she simply must play along with this peculiar giant and smile at his jokes.

But were they jokes? Perhaps the great brute was just working up an appetite by talking about food.
‘As I am saying,’ the Giant went on, ‘all human beans is having different flavours. Human beans from Panama is tasting very strong of hats.’
‘Why hats?’ Sophie said.
‘You is not very clever,’ the Giant said, moving his great ears in and out. ‘I thought all human beans is full of brains, but your head is emptier than a bundongle.’
‘Do you like vegetables?’ Sophie asked, hoping to steer the conversation towards a slightly less dangerous kind of food.
‘You is trying to change the subject,’ the Giant said sternly. ‘We is having an interesting babblement about the taste of the human bean. The human bean is not a vegetable.’
‘Oh, but the bean is a vegetable,’ Sophie said.
‘Not the human bean,’ the Giant said. ‘The human bean has two legs and a vegetable has no legs at all.’
Sophie didn’t argue any more. The last thing she wanted to do was to make the Giant cross.
‘The human bean,’ the Giant went on, ‘is coming in dillions of different flavours. For instance, human beans from Wales is tasting very whooshey of fish. There is something very fishy about Wales.’
‘You means whales,’ Sophie said. ‘Wales is something quite different.’
‘Wales is whales,’ the Giant said. ‘Don’t gobblefunk around with words. I will now give you another example. Human beans from Jersey has a most disgustable woolly tickle on the tongue,’ the Giant said. ‘Human beans from Jersey is tasting of cardigans.’
‘You mean jerseys,’ Sophie said.
‘You are once again gobblefunking!’ the Giant shouted. ‘Don’t do it! This is a serious and snitching subject. May I continue?’
‘Please do,’ Sophie said.
‘Danes from Denmark is tasting ever so much of dogs,’ the Giant went on.
‘Of course,’ Sophie said. ‘They taste of great danes.’
‘Wrong!’ cried the Giant, slapping his thigh. ‘Danes from Denmark is tasting doggy because they is tasting of labradors!’
‘Then what do the people of Labrador taste of?’ Sophie asked.
‘Danes,’ the Giant cried, triumphantly. ‘Great danes!’
‘Aren’t you getting a bit mixed up?’ Sophie said.
‘I is a very mixed up Giant,’ the Giant said. ‘But I does do my best. And I is not nearly as mixed up as the other giants. I know one who gallops all the way to Wellington for his supper.’
‘Wellington?’ Sophie said. ‘Where is Wellington?’
‘Your head is full of squashed flies,’ the Giant said. ‘Wellington is in

New Zealand. The human beans in Wellington has an especially scrumdiddlyumptious taste, so says the Welly-eating Giant.'
'What do the people of Wellington taste of?' Sophie asked.
'Boots,' the Giant said.
'Of course,' Sophie said. 'I should have known.'
Sophie decided that this conversation had now gone on long enough. If she was going to be eaten, she'd rather get it over and done with right away than be kept hanging around any more. 'What sort of human beings do you eat?' she asked, trembling.
'Me!' shouted the Giant, his mighty voice making the glass jars rattle on their shelves. 'Me gobbling up human beans! This I never! The others, yes! All the others is gobbling them up every night, but not me! I is a freaky Giant! I is a nice and jumbly Giant! I is the only nice and jumbly Giant in Giant Country! I is THE BIG FRIENDLY GIANT! I is the BFG. What is your name?'
'My name is Sophie,' Sophie said, hardly daring to believe the good news she had just heard.

5. Die GSR

Die reus tel die bewende Sophie met een hand op, dra haar deur die grot en sit haar op die tafel neer.
Nóú gaan hy my regtig eet, dink Sophie.
Die reus gaan sit op die stoel en bekyk haar. Hy het regtig enorme ore, dink Sophie. Elkeen is so groot soos die wiele van ’n yslike lorrie, en dit lyk asof hy hulle lirt soos hy wil vorentoe en agtertoe kan flap.
“Ek honger,” bulder hy. Hy grinnik en wys sy ta-maai, vierkantige tande. Die tande is baie wit en baie
vierkantig en hulle sit in sy mond soos reuse-snye wit-brood.
“A-as-asseblief, moet my tog nie opeet nie!” smeek
Sophie.
Die reus lag oorverdowend. “Net omdat ek reus, dink jy ek ménsgopselende kannibul! Jy bietjie reg! Reuse almal kannibulle en vreet almal mensdommes! Jy ho Li in Reuseland! Reuse oraloor! Daar buite lê bedoemde Beenknerser! Beenknerser vreet elke nag twee wicl’elend-waffelend mensdommes! Geluid oorbarsend! Hoor geluid van knersende, krakende mensdommes kiloliters ver!”
“Agge nee!” kreun Sophie.
“Beenknerser vreet net mensdommes van Turkye.”
Sophie is heeltemal afgehaal dat Beenknerser so dis-kriminerend kan wees. “Hoekom net Turke?” vra sy. “Wat is verkeerd met ons Engelse?”
“Beenknerser sê Turke proesel lekkerbekkiger en
slapsoeteriger as ander. Hy sê Turke proesel van vye.”
“Waarskynlik sal hy so dink . . sê Sophie al was turksvye nog nooit vir háár lekker nie.
“Natuurlik sal hy!” skree die reus. “Elke mensdomme asserig en anders. Sommige smeklekker en ander asblikkerig. Thailanders asblikkerig. Reuse vreet nooit
mensdommes van Thailand.” “Waarom nie?”
“Want Thailanders proesel taai,” verseker die reus haar.
“Ek veronderstel dis moontlik,” sê Sophie. Sy is baie benoud omdat die gesprek net om mensvreters en hulle prooi draai, maar sy besef dat sy die vrede sal moet be-waar en maar moet lag vir die reus se grappies.
Maar is dit grappies? Miskien blaas hy juis sy eetlus aan deur daaroor te praat.
“Soos ek sê, elke mensdomme anders proesel. Mens
dommes van Afrika sterk proesel van beeste.” “Hoekom beeste?” vra Sophie verbaas.

“Jy nie baie slim,” sê die reus en flap sy ore. “Ek
gedagtig alle mensdommes se koppe vol hardsing maar jou kop leer as bondongels!”
“Hou jy van groente?” vra Sophie in ’n poging om weg te kom van die gevaarlike kosbespreking.
“Jy perbeer onderwerp skuiwe,” betig hy haar. “Ons
nou brabbel intevesant oor proesel van mensdommes. Mensdommes nie groente. Mensdommes het twee bene. Groente geen bene.”
Sophie sê maar niks verder nie. Sy wil beslis nie die reus kwaad maak nie.
“Mensdommes,” gaan die reus voort, “het billiejoene
proesels. Mensdommes van Walvis proesel sjwiesj-sjwasj na vis. lets visserigs aan Walvis.”
“Jy bedoel seker Wal-LIS,” sê Sophie. “Wal-VIS is iets heel anders.”
“Walvis is walvis,” sê die reus. “Moenie vroetel met woorde! Ek gee nog voorbeeld. Mensdommes van Lap land proesel van teramiaal.”
“Jy bedoel hulle smaak na lap,” korrigeer Sophie hom.
“Daar grobbel-vroetel jy weer!!” skree die reus. “Moenie! Dit ernstige en grypende onderwerp. Mag ek vorder?”
“Asseblief,” sê Sophie.
“Franse van Frankryk proesel van hond!” sê die reus. “Natuurlik,” sê Sophie, wat nou begin saamspeel,
“hulle smaak na poedels.”
“Links!” sê die reus en klap met sy groot hande teen sy dye. “Franse van Frankryk proesel van labrador!”
“Maar waarna smaak die mense van Labrador dan?”
vra Sophie, wat nou self verward is.
“Poedels!” roep die reus triomfantlik uit. “Hulle proesel na poedels!”
“Is jy nie ’n bietjie deurmekaar nie?” sê Sophie.
“Ek altyd ondermekaar,” antwoord hy. “Ek ondermekaar reus. Maar ek doen my goedste. En ek nie so ondermekaar soos ander reuse! Een galop elke nag na Wenen vir opstopper.”
“Wenen?” vra Sophie. “Waar is Wenen?”
“Jou kop vol platgedrukte vlieë,” sê die reus. “Wenen in Oostenryk. Mensdommes in Wenen spesinjale smekheerlike proesel, so sê reuse.”
“Maar waarna smaak die mense van Wenen?” vra
Sophie.
“Weense worsies!” antwoord die reus. “Ek kon dit geraai het!” sê Sophie.
Sy besluit dat die gesprek nou lank genoeg geduur het. As die reus haar dan moet opeet, hoe gouer hoe be-ter. “Watter soort mense eet jy?” vra sy versigtig.
“lik?” skree die reus verontwaardig en sy harde stem lant die flesse op die rakke kletter. “Ek nooit mensdommes vreet! Ander reuse gopsel

mensdommes elke nag. Nie ekke! Ek anderste reus. Ek gaaf en goedig. Enigste gttitf en goedig reus in land. My naam Groot Sagmoedige Reus! My naam GSR. Wat jóú naam?”

“My naam is Sophie,” sê sy baie verlig, al weet sy nie of sy regtig die goeie nuus wat sy so pas gehoor het, kan glo nie.

6. THE GIANTS

'But if you are so nice and friendly,' Sophie said, 'then why did you snatch me from my bed and run away with me?'
'Because you SAW me,' the Big Friendly Giant answered. 'If anyone is ever SEEING a giant, he or she must be taken away hipswitch.'
'Why?' asked Sophie.
'Well, first of all,' said the BFG, 'human beans is not really believingin giants, is they? Human beans is not thinking we exist.'
'I do,' Sophie said.
'Ah, but that is only because you has SEEN me!' cried the BFG. 'I cannot possibly allow anyone,even little girls, to be SEEING me and staying at home. The first thing you would be doing, you would be scuddling around yodelling the news that you were actually SEEING a giant, and then a great giant-hunt, a mighty giant look-see, would be starting up all over the world, with the human beans all rummaging for the great giant you saw and getting wildly excited. People would be coming rushing and bushing after me with goodness knows what and they would be catching me and locking me into a cage to be stared at. They would be putting me into the zoo or the bunkumhouse with all those squiggling hippodumplings and crocadowndillies.'
Sophie knew that what the Giant said was true. If any person reported actually having seen a giant haunting the streets of a town at night, there would most certainly be a terrific hullabaloo across the world.
'I will bet you,' the BFG went on, 'that you would have been splashing the news all over the wonky world, wouldn't you, if I hadn't wiggled you away?'
'I suppose I would,' Sophie said.
'And that would never do,' said the BFG.
'So what will happen to me now?' Sophie asked.
'If you do go back, you will be telling the world,' said the BFG, 'most likely on the telly-telly bunkum box and the radio squeaker. So you will just have to be staying here with me for the rest of your life.'
'Oh no!' cried Sophie.
'Oh yes!' said the BFG. 'But I am warning you not ever to go whiffling about out of this cave without I is with you or you will be coming to an ucky-mucky end! I is showing you now who is going to eat you up if they is ever catching even one tiny little glimp of you.'
The Big Friendly Giant picked Sophie off the table and carried her to the cave entrance. He rolled the huge stone to one side and said, 'Peep out over there, little girl, and tell me what you is seeing.'
Sophie, sitting on the BFG's hand, peeped out of the cave.

The sun was up now and shining fiery-hot over the great yellow wasteland with its blue rocks and dead trees.
'Is you seeing them?' the BFG asked.
Sophie, squinting through the glare of the sun, saw several tremendous tall figures moving among the rocks about five hundred yards away. Three or four others were sitting quite motionless on the rocks themselves.
'This is Giant Country,' the BFG said. 'Those is all giants, every one.'
It was a brain-boggling sight. The giants were all naked except for a sort of short skirt around their waists, and their skins were burnt brown by the sun. But it was the sheer size of each one of them that
boggled Sophie's brain most of all. They were simply colossal, far taller and wider than the Big Friendly Giant upon whose hand she was now sitting. And oh how ugly they were! Many of them had large bellies. All of them had long arms and big feet. They were too far away for their faces to be seen clearly, and perhaps that was a good thing.
'What on earth are they doing?' Sophie asked.
'Nothing,' said the BFG. 'They is just moocheling and footcheling around and waiting for the night to come. Then they will all be galloping off to places where people is living to find their suppers.'
'You mean to Turkey,' Sophie said.
'Bonecrunching Giant will be galloping to Turkey, of course,' said the BFG. 'But the others will be whiffling off to all sorts of flungaway places like Wellington for the booty flavour and Panama for the hatty taste. Every giant is having his own favourite hunting ground.'
'Do they ever go to England?' Sophie asked.
'Often,' said the BFG. 'They say the English is tasting ever so wonderfully of crodscollop.'
'I'm not sure I quite know what that means,' Sophie said.
'Meanings is not important,' said the BFG. 'I cannot be right all the time. Quite often I is left instead of right.'
'And are all those beastly giants over there really going off again tonight to eat people?' Sophie asked.
'All of them is guzzling human beans every night,' the BFG answered. 'All of them excepting me. That is why you will be coming to an ucky-mucky end if any of them should ever be getting his gogglers upon you. You would be swalloped up like a piece of frumpkin pie, all in one dollop!'
'But eating people is horrible!' Sophie cried. 'It's frightful! Why doesn't someone stop them?'
'And who please is going to be stopping them?' asked the BFG.
'Couldn't you?' said Sophie.
'Never in a pig's whistle!' cried the BFG. 'All of those man-eating

giants is enormous and very fierce! They is all at least two times my wideness and double my royal highness!'
'Twice as high as you!' cried Sophie.
'Easily that,' said the BFG. 'You is seeing them in the distance but just wait till you get them close up. Those giants is all at least fifty feet tall with huge muscles and cockles alive alive-o. I is the titchy one. I is the runt. Twenty-four feet is puddlenuts in Giant Country.'
'You mustn't feel bad about it,' Sophie said. 'I think you are just great. Why even your toes must be as big as sausages.'
'Bigger,' said the BFG, looking pleased. 'They is as big as bumplehammers.'
'How many giants are there out there?' Sophie asked.
'Nine altogether,' answered the BFG.
'That means,' said Sophie, 'that somewhere in the world, every single night, nine wretched people get carried away and eaten alive.'
'More,' said the BFG. 'It is all depending, you see, on how big the human beans is. Japanese beans is very small, so a giant will need to gobble up about six Japanese before he is feeling full up. Others like the Norway people and the Yankee-Doodles is ever so much bigger and usually two or three of those makes a good tuck-in.'
'But do these disgusting giants go to every single country in the world?' Sophie asked.
'All countries excepting Greece is getting visited some time or another,' the BFG answered. 'The country which a giant visits is depending on how he is feeling. If it is very warm weather and a giant is feeling as hot as a sizzlepan, he will probably go galloping far up to the frisby north to get himself an Esquimo or two to cool him down. A nice fat Esquimo to a giant is like a lovely ice-cream lolly to you.'
'I'll take your word for it,' Sophie said.
'And then again, if it is a frotsy night and the giant is fridging with cold, he will probably point his nose towards the swultering hotlands to guzzle a few Hottentots to warm him up.'
'How perfectly horrible,' Sophie said.
'Nothing hots a cold giant up like a hot Hottentot,' the BFG said.
'And if you were to put me down on the ground and I was to walk out among them now,' Sophie said, 'would they really eat me up?'
'Like a whiffswiddle!' cried the BFG. 'And what is more, you is so small they wouldn't even have to chew you. The first one to be seeing you would pick you up in his fingers and down you'd go like a drop of drain-water!'
'Let's go back inside,' Sophie said. 'I hate even watching them.'

6. Die reuse

“Maar as jy so gaaf en sagmoedig is,” vra Sophie, “waarom het jy my dan uit my bed gegryp en ontvoer?”
“Oordat jy my gesien het,” antwoord die Groot Sagmoedige Reus saaklik. “As iemand reus sien, moet hulle verdwyn.”
“Hoekom?” vra Sophie.
“Want mensdommes glo nie aan reuse. Mensdommes dink reuse net in storieboek.”
“Ek weet,” sê Sophie ernstig.
“Ja, jý weet,” sê die GSR, “maar ook net oordat jy gesién het. Ek kan nie verlaat dat iemand my sien, selfs nie so klein mensdomme soos jy. Want so gou soos oor-móre sal jy rondwarrel en nuus vertel dat jy regtig reus gesien het. Dan sal ander mensdommes baie opgewonde skree en ook rondwarrel my te soek. Hulle sal my skraag en agternahardloop en vang en in hok sit sodat almal my sien. Want dit wat mensdommes met snaakse dierklasies doen. Hulle sal my in dierklasie-tuin sit met likkedille en krokkerosters.”
Sophie weet dis waar. As iemand sou sê dat hy ’n
reus in die middel van die nag in die dorp se strate gesien het, sou daar ’n allemintige herrie losbars soos hulle die wêreld oor na reuse soek.
“Ek seker,” vervolg die GSR, “jy nuus oor wanke-lend wêreld versprei as ek jou nie opgepik en weggedra het.”
“Ek sou waarskynlik,” sê Sophie.
“ 1 in dit krimireel,” sê die GSR.
“Maar wat gaan nou van my word?” vra Sophie.
“As ek jou terugvoer, jy hele wêreld vertel op tele-kwassie en radiopieper,” sê die GSR, “dus bly jy hier vir res van lewe.”
“Agge nee!” roep Sophie uit.
“Agge ja!” kap die GSR terug. “En ek jou sterk sê dsn jy nie sonder my by grot uitgaan, want jy sal vrees-inklige einde kry. Ek jou sommer nou wys wie jou op-fopsel as hulle net glims-glams van jou kry.”
Die Groot Sagmoedige Reus tel Sophie van die tafel af Op en dra haar na die ingang van die grot. Hy rol die groot rots eenkant toe en sê: “Kyk daar, klein mensdomme, en sê my wat jy sien met oogkykers.”
I in Sophie, wat op die reus se hand sit, kyk om haar
hccn. Die son skyn nou bloedig warm oor die groot, geel wnestynwêreld met die blou rotsblokke en die swart boomgeraamtes.
“Sien jy hulle?” vra die GSR.
Sophie kyk met skrefies-oë in die fel sonlig en sien,
10 driehonderd meter van hulle af, bruin blokke rond-bcweeg. Drie of

vier van hulle sit-lê teen die blou rotse. “Reuseland dié,” sê die GSR trots. “Almal reuse daar.”
Dis ’n verstommende gesig. Die reuse is kaal afgesien
van so ’n soort rompie wat laag om die heupe sit. Hulle is bruin gebrand van die son. Maar dis die gróótte van die reuse wat Sophie oorweldig. Hulle is kolossaal, en baie langer en breër as die GSR. En die reuse is so lélik! Almal het la-a-a-ng arms en yslike voete. Sy is te ver weg om hulle gesigte duidelik te kan sien. Ook maar goed so.
“Wat maak hulle?” vra Sophie.
“Niks,” antwoord die GSR. “Hulle klaploop en slap-loop in rondte en wag vir donker. Dan galop hulle weg vir gopselkos.”
“Jy bedoel na Turkye?” vra Sophie.
“Beenknerser na Turkye gaan, maar ander waffel-wiefel na weggooi-plekke soos Wenen vir worsieproesel en Afrika vir beeste-proesel. Elkeen het eie liefieplek.”
“Gaan hulle ooit Engeland toe?” vra Sophie belangstellend.
“Baiekeer,” antwoord die GSR. “Hulle sê Engelsman proesel smeklekker - nes gerubmyne.”
“Ek is nie so seker dat ek weet wat gerub-, gerub
myne is nie,” sê Sophie.
“Betekenis nie belangrik,” sê die GSR. “Goeie be-grip verkeerde woord nodig. Ek nie altyd regs. Baiekeer ek links in plaas van regs.”
“Gaan al daardie aaklige monsters daar anderkant viinnag mense jag?” vra die geskokte Sophie.
“Ja. Almal. Hulle vreet elke nag mensdommes. Almal
- net nie ek. Dis daarom dat jy vreesaaklige end sal hê as jy hier uitflerts. As hulle oogkykers jou vang, sal hul-lt* jou nouer as gou soos stuk poempamtert insluk. Sommerso in een happel.”
“Maar dis wrééd om mense te eet!” sê Sophie. “Dis
verskriklik! Kan niemand hulle keer nie?” “Wie dink jy sal keer?” vra die GSR. “Kan jý nie?” vra Sophie.
“Nooit as te emmer! Al darie reuse enorm en woeste-rig kwaai. Hulle twee maal my breedtegraad en dubbel
my koninklike hoogheid!”
“Twee keer so groot soos jy?” fluister Sophie be-noud.
“Maklik twee keer,” sê die GSR. “Jy sien hulle nou ver. Wag tot hulle naby kom. Darie reuse ten slimste sestien meter hoog met ysvolle groot bobbelrig stiere. Ek piepjas - ek kwar - ek uitsmyt-reus,” sê die GSR mismoedig.
“Moenie sleg voel nie,” troos Sophie, “ek dink jy is wonderlik, al is jy nie so groot soos hulle nie. Kyk net waiter tamaai tone het jy! Hulle lyk soos tien groot worse!”
“Groter!” spog die GSR. “Hulle so groot soos stam-pelhamers.”
“Hoeveel reuse is daar?” vra Sophie. “Nege,” antwoord die GSR.

“Dit beteken,” sê Sophie, “dat daar elke nag, êrens in die wêreld, nege mense weggedra en opgeëet word.”
“Baie meer,” sê die GSR. “Hang af van mensdom mes. Mensdommes van Japan baie klein - reuse eet ses van hulle om pens op te stop. Ander mensdommes soos Boere en Yanks groot. Dan twee of drie opstoppende ete.”
“Gaan soek die reuse oral in die wêreld kos?” vra
Sophie, en ril.
“Oral,” antwoord die GSR, “behalwe Thailand waar mensdommes so taai. Alles afhangend van reuse se lustigheid. Wanneer warm soos koekepan, galop hulle mis kien na vrieslike Noorde vir lekker Eskimo of ses. Lek-ker vrieslike Eskimo proesel net so smekheerlik soos ysroom vir jou.”
“As jy so sê!” sê Sophie.
“Aan annerkant,” vervolg die GSR, “as vrieslike nag en reus yskaskoud, gee hy pad na stikwarm plekke.”
“Soos?” vra Sophie.
“Niks maak reus so lekker warm soos mensdommes van Warmbad!”
“As jy nou vir my hier moet neersit en ek loop tussen hulle in, sal hulle my régtig opeet?” vra Sophie.
“Soos warrelasem!” verseker die GSR haar. “Jy so
klein, hulle sal nie eens kou. Eerste een wat jou kyk, pik jou op en sluk jou weg soos druppel bobbelbrou.”
“Kom ons gaan liewer terug,” sê Sophie. “Ek gril as ck na hulle kyk.”

7. THE MARVELLOUS EARS

Back in the cave, the Big Friendly Giant sat Sophie down once again on the enormous table. 'Is you quite snuggly there in your nightie?' he asked. 'You isn't fridgy cold?'
'I'm fine,' Sophie said.
'I cannot help thinking,' said the BFG, 'about your poor mother and father. By now they must be jipping and skumping all over the house shouting "Hello hello where is Sophie gone?"'
'I don't have a mother and father,' Sophie said. 'They both died when I was a baby.'
'Oh, you poor little scrumplet!' cried the BFG. 'Is you not missing them very badly?'
'Not really,' Sophie said, 'because I never knew them.'
'You is making me sad,' the BFG said, rubbing his eyes.
'Don't be sad,' Sophie said. 'No one is going to be worrying too much about me. That place you took me from was the village orphanage. We are all orphans in there.'
'You is a norphan?'
'Yes.'
'How many is there in there?'
'Ten of us,' Sophie said. 'All little girls.'
'Was you happy there?' the BFG asked.
'I hated it,' Sophie said. 'The woman who ran it was called Mrs Clonkers and if she caught you breaking any of the rules, like getting out of bed at night or not folding up your clothes, you got punished.'
'How is you getting punished?'
'She locked us in the dark cellar for a day and a night without anything to eat or drink.'
'The rotten old rotrasper!' cried the BFG.
'It was horrid,' Sophie said. 'We used to dread it. There were rats down there. We could hear them creeping about.'
'The filthy old fizzwiggler!' shouted the BFG. 'That is the horridest thing I is hearing for years! You is making me sadder than ever!' All at once, a huge tear that would have filled a bucket rolled down one of the BFG's cheeks and fell with a splash on the floor. It made quite a puddle.
Sophie watched with astonishment. What a strange and moody creature this is, she thought. One moment he is telling me my head is full of squashed flies and the next moment his heart is melting for me because Mrs Clonkers locks us in the cellar.
'The thing that worries me,' Sophie said, 'is having to stay in this

dreadful place for the rest of my life. The orphanage was pretty awful, but I wouldn't have been there for ever, would I?'
'All is my fault,' the BFG said. 'I is the one who kidsnatched you.' Yet another enormous tear welled from his eye and splashed on to the floor.
'Now I come to think of it, I won't actually be here all that long,' Sophie said.
'I is afraid you will,' the BFG said.
'No, I won't,' Sophie said. 'Those brutes out there are bound to catch me sooner or later and have me for tea.'
'I is never letting that happen,' the BFG said.
For a few moments the cave was silent. Then Sophie said, 'May I ask you a question?'
The BFG wiped the tears from his eyes with the back of his hand and gave Sophie a long thoughtful stare. 'Shoot away,' he said.
'Would you please tell me what you were doing in our village last night? Why were you poking that long trumpet thing into the Goochey children's bedroom and then blowing through it?'
'Ah-ha!' cried the BFG, sitting up suddenly in his chair. 'Now we is getting nosier than a parker!'
'And the suitcase you were carrying,' Sophie said. 'What on earth was thatall about?'
The BFG stared suspiciously at the small girl sitting cross-legged on the table.
'You is asking me to tell you whoppsy big secrets,' he said. 'Secrets that nobody is ever hearing before.'
'I won't tell a soul,' Sophie said. 'I swear it. How could I anyway? I am stuck here for the rest of my life.'
'You could be telling the other giants.'
'No, I couldn't,' Sophie said. 'You told me they would eat me up the moment they saw me.'
'And so they would,' said the BFG. 'You is a human bean and human beans is like strawbunkles and cream to those giants.'
'If they are going to eat me the moment they see me, then I wouldn't have time to tell them anything, would I?' Sophie said.
'You wouldn't,' said the BFG.
'Then why did you say I might?'
'Because I is brimful of buzzburgers,' the BFG said. 'If you listen to everything I am saying you will be getting earache.'
'Please tell me what you were doing in our village,' Sophie said. 'I promise you can trust me.'
'Would you teach me how to make an elefunt?' the BFG asked.
'What do you mean?' Sophie said.
'I would dearly love to have an elefunt to ride on,' the BFG said

dreamily. 'I would so much love to have a jumbly big elefunt and go riding through green forests picking peachy fruits off the trees all day long. This is a sizzling-hot muckfrumping country we is living in. Nothing grows in it except snozzcumbers. I would love to go somewhere else and pick peachy fruits in the early morning from the back of an elefunt.'

Sophie was quite moved by this curious statement.

'Perhaps one day we will get you an elephant,' she said. 'And peachy fruits as well. Now tell me what you were doing in our village.'

'If you is really wanting to know what I am doing in your village,' the BFG said, 'I is blowing a dream into the bedroom of those children.'

'Blowing a dream?' Sophie said. 'What do you mean?'

'I is a dream-blowing giant,' the BFG said. 'When all the other giants is galloping off every what way and which to swollop human beans, I is scuddling away to other places to blow dreams into the bedrooms of sleeping children. Nice dreams. Lovely golden dreams. Dreams that is giving the dreamers a happy time.'

'Now hang on a minute,' Sophie said. 'Where do you get these dreams?'

'I collect them,' the BFG said, waving an arm towards all the rows and rows of bottles on the shelves. 'I has billions of them.'

'You can't collect a dream,' Sophie said. 'A dream isn't something you can catch hold of.'

'You is never going to understand about it,' the BFG said. 'That is why I is not wishing to tell you.'

'Oh, please tell me!' Sophie said. 'I will understand! Go on! Tell me how you collect dreams! Tell me everything!'

The BFG settled himself comfortably in his chair and crossed his legs.

'Dreams,' he said, 'is very mysterious things. They is floating around in the air like little wispy-misty bubbles. And all the time they is searching for sleeping people.'

'Can you see them?' Sophie asked.

'Never at first.'

'Then how do you catch them if you can't see them?' Sophie asked.

'Ah-ha,' said the BFG. 'Now we is getting on to the dark and dusky secrets.'

'I won't tell a soul.'

'I is trusting you,' the BFG said. He closed his eyes and sat quite still for a moment, while Sophie waited.

'A dream,' he said, 'as it goes whiffling through the night air, is making a tiny little buzzing-humming noise. But this little buzzy-hum is so silvery soft, it is impossible for a human bean to be hearing it.'

'Can you hear it?' Sophie asked.

The BFG pointed up at his enormous truck-wheel ears which he now

began to move in and out. He performed this exercise proudly, with a little proud smile on his face. 'Is you seeing these?' he asked.
'How could I miss them?' Sophie said.
'They maybe is looking a bit propsposterous to you,' the BFG said, 'but you must believe me when I say they is very extra-usual ears indeed. They is not to be coughed at.'
'I'm quite sure they're not,' Sophie said.
'They is allowing me to hear absolutely every single twiddly little thing.'
'You mean you can hear things I can't hear?' Sophie said.
'You is deaf as a dumpling compared with me!' cried the BFG. 'You is hearing only thumping loud noises with those little earwigs of yours. But I am hearing all the secret whisperings of the world!'
'Such as what?' Sophie asked.
'In your country,' he said, 'I is hearing the footsteps of a ladybird as she goes walking across a leaf.'
'Honestly?' Sophie said, beginning to be impressed.
'What's more, I is hearing those footsteps very loud,' the BFG said. 'When a ladybird is walking across a leaf, I is hearing her feet going clumpety-clumpety-clump like giants' footsteps.'
'Good gracious me!' Sophie said. 'What else can you hear?'
'I is hearing the little ants chittering to each other as they scuddle around in the soil.'
'You mean you can hear ants talking?'
'Every single word,' the BFG said. 'Although I is not exactly understanding their langwitch.'
'Go on,' Sophie said.
'Sometimes, on a very clear night,' the BFG said, 'and if I is swiggling my ears in the right direction,' — and here he swivelled his great ears upwards so they were facing the ceiling — 'if I is swiggling them like this and the night is very clear, I is sometimes hearing faraway music coming from the stars in the sky.'
A queer little shiver passed through Sophie's body. She sat very quiet, waiting for more.
'My ears is what told me you was watching me out of your window last night,' the BFG said.
'But I didn't make a sound,' Sophie said.
'I was hearing your heart beating across the road,' the BFG said. 'Loud as a drum.'
'Go on,' Sophie said. 'Please.'
'I can hear plants and trees.'
'Do they talk?' Sophie asked.
'They is not exactly talking,' the BFG said. 'But they is making noises. For instance, if I come along and I is picking a lovely flower, if I is

twisting the stem of the flower till it breaks, then the plant is screaming. I can hear it screaming and screaming very clear.'

'You don't mean it!' Sophie cried. 'How awful!'

'It is screaming just like you would be screaming if someone was twisting your arm right off.'

'Is that really true?' Sophie asked.

'You think I is swizzfiggling you?'

'It is rather hard to believe.'

'Then I is stopping right here,' said the BFG sharply. 'I is not wishing to be called a fibster.'

'Oh no! I'm not calling you anything!' Sophie cried. 'I believe you! I do really! Please go on!'

The BFG gave her a long hard stare. Sophie looked right back at him, her face open to his. 'I believe you,' she said softly.

She had offended him, she could see that.

'I wouldn't ever be fibbling to you,' he said.

'I know you wouldn't,' Sophie said. 'But you must understand that it isn't easy to believe such amazing things straightaway.'

'I understand that,' the BFG said.

'So do please forgive me and go on,' she said.

He waited a while longer, and then he said, 'It is the same with trees as it is with flowers. If I is chopping an axe into the trunk of a big tree, I is hearing a terrible sound coming from inside the heart of the tree.'

'What sort of sound?' Sophie asked.

'A soft moaning sound,' the BFG said. 'It is like the sound an old man is making when he is dying slowly.'

He paused. The cave was very silent.

'Trees is living and growing just like you and me,' he said. 'They is alive. So is plants.'

He was sitting very straight in his chair now, his hands clasped tightly together in front of him. His face was bright, his eyes round and bright as two stars.

'Such wonderful and terrible sounds I is hearing!' he said. 'Some of them you would never wish to be hearing yourself! But some is like glorious music!'

He seemed almost to be transfigured by the excitement of his thoughts. His face was beautiful in its blaze of emotions.

'Tell me some more about them,' Sophie said quietly.

'You just ought to be hearing the little micies talking!' he said. 'Little micies is always talking to each other and I is hearing them as loud as my own voice.'

'What do they say?' Sophie asked.

'Only the micies know that,' he said. 'Spiders is also talking a great deal. You might not be thinking it but spiders is the most tremendous

natterboxes. And when they is spinning their webs, they is singing all the time. They is singing sweeter than a nightingull.'

'Who else do you hear?' Sophie asked.

'One of the biggest chatbags is the cattlepiddlers,' the BFG said.

'What do they say?'

'They is argying all the time about who is going to be the prettiest butteryfly. That is all they is ever talking about.'

'Is there a dream floating around in here now?' Sophie asked.

The BFG moved his great ears this way and that, listening intently. He shook his head. 'There is no dream in here,' he said, 'except in the bottles. I has a special place to go for catching dreams. They is not often coming to Giant Country.'

'How do you catch them?'

'The same way you is catching butteryflies,' the BFG answered. 'With a net.' He stood up and crossed over to a corner of the cave where a pole was leaning against the wall. The pole was about thirty feet long and there was a net on the end of it. 'Here is the dream-catcher,' he said, grasping the pole in one hand. 'Every morning I is going out and snitching new dreams to put in my bottles.'

Suddenly, he seemed to lose interest in the conversation. 'I is getting hungry,' he said. 'It is time for eats.'

7. Die wonderlike ore

Terug in die grot sit die Groot Sagmoedige Reus weer vir Sophie op die tafel neer. “Jy genuffel in jou nag-rok?” vra hy. “Jy yskaskoud?”
“Ek is heeltemal gemaklik, dankie,” sê Sophie.
“Ek dink altyd en ewig jou arme pa en ma,” sê die GSR. “Hulle seker hinkende-rinkende van bekommer-vol oor jou en skree: ‘Sophie, waar jy nou?’”
“Ek het nie ’n pa en ’n ma nie,” antwoord Sophie. “Hulle is albei dood toe ek nog ’n baba was.”
“Ag, arme klein krokketot!” sê die GSR. “Verlang jy baie na hulle?”
“Nie eintlik nie,” sê Sophie, “want ek het hulle nooit geken nie.”
“Jy maak my seerhart.” Die GSR vryf oor sy oë. “Moenie hartseer wees nie,” troos Sophie. “Niemand
sal hulle oor my bekommer nie. Die plek waaruit jy my gesteel het, is die dorp se weeshuis. Ons is almal wees—
kinders wat daar woon.”
“Jy weeskidderen?”
“Ja.”
“Hoeveel weeskidderens daar?”
“Tien,” antwoord Sophie. “Almal meisies.” “Jy gelukkig daar?” vra die GSR.
“Ek haat dit,” antwoord Sophie. “Die hoof is mevrou Klopper, en as sy agterkom dat jy ’n reel oortree het, soos byvoorbeeld om snags uit jou bed te klim of om nie jou klere weg te sit nie, straf sy jou.”
“Hoe straf sy?”
“Sy sluit ons ’n dag en ’n nag lank in ’n donker kel-dei toe sonder enigiets om te eet of te drink.”
“Nare ou rotrasper!” raas die GSR.
“Dit is verskriklik,” sê Sophie. “Ons is doodbang vir dir rotte in die kelder. ’n Mens kan duidelik hoor hoe hulle rondskarrel.”
“Vuil ou hekseketel!” skel die GSR. “Dit vreesaak-ligsie ding wat ek nog gehoor het! Jy maak my droewiger as ooit.” Meteens rol ’n groot traan teen sy wang af Dis so groot dat dit ’n emmer kan volmaak. Dit val met ’n plof op die vloer en vorm ’n poeletjie.
Sophie kyk hom verbaas aan. Wat ’ji eienaardige en buierige reus is hy tog nie! dink sy. Die een oomblik Vertel hy my my kop is vol platgedrukte vlieë en die
volgende oomblik is hy in trane omdat mevrou Klopper
my soms in die kelder toegesluit het!
“Die ding wat my eintlik hinder,” sê Sophie, “is dat ek vir die res van my lewe in hierdie aaklige plek moet woon. Die weeshuis was erg

genoeg, maar ek sou tog nie vir ewig daar gebly het nie."
"Dit alles my skuld," sê die GSR mistroostig. "Ek
die een wat jou vervoer het." Nog 'n reuse-traan wel in
«V oog op en plas op die vloer neer.
"Maar nou ja," vervolg Sophie, "soos dit vir my lyk, sal ek in elk geval seker nie lank hier bly nie."
"Ek dink jy sal," sê die GSR.
"Glad nie," sê Sophie. "Daardie nare reuse sal my wel een of ander tyd te siene kry en dan is dit klaar met my." "Ek dit nóóit toelaat," sê die GSR beslis.
Daar is 'n rukkie stilte. Dan sê Sophie: "Mag ek jou
iets vra?"
Die GSR vee die trane uit sy oe met die agterkant van sy hand en sê: "Vra maar."
"Vertel my haarfyn wat jy gisteraand in ons dorp gemaak het! Hoekom het jy daardie lang trompet-affêre deur die Green-kinders se slaapkamervenster gesteek en daarop geblaas?"
"Aha!" en die GSR glimlag, "nou jy agieër as apie!" "En die koffer wat jy gedra het?" vra Sophie verder.
"Wat op aarde was dáárin?"
Die GSR kyk agterdogtig na die dogtertjie wat kruisbeen op die tafel sit.
"Jy vra my groot geheim persent," sê hy uiteindelik. "Geheim wat mensdommes nie ken."
"Ek sal vir niemand vertel nie," sê Sophie. "Ek belowe jou. Hoe kan ek in elk geval? Jy sê dan self ek moet die res van my lewe hier bly!"
"Jy kan ander reuse vertel," sê die GSR.
"Hoe? Hulle sal my mos opeet sodra hulle my sien!" "Ook waar," gee die GSR toe. "Jy mensdomme en
vir hulle proesel mensdommes net so smeklekker as wap en pors vir jou."
"En," redeneer Sophie, "as hulle my so vinnig sal in-sluk soos jy sê, sal ek nie týd hê om hulle iets te vertel nie!"
"Nee, jy sal nie," erken die GSR.
"Nou maar hoekom het jy dan gesê ek sal vir hulle vertel?"
"Want ek oorloopvol van zoemstorieboeke. As jy alles hoor wat in my ore rondskrabbel, jy maagpyn kry."
"Vertel my ássébliéf wat jy in die dorp gemaak het!"
soebat Sophie. "Jy kan my regtigwaar vertrou. Ek be
lowe."
"Sal jy dan vir my leer hoe om holliefant te maak?"
vra die GSR.
"Hoe nou?" Sophie is nie so seker wat hy vra nie.
"Ek wil holliefant ry," sê hy dromerig. "Ek wil groot, rollende

holliefant hê. Snikwarme brandend land hier. As ek holliefant het, ry ek deur groen bosse en eet perskevrug. Hier net viesaaklige snorkommers. Holliefant ry my droom, maar hy kom nie waar … ”

Sophie is skoon aangedaan.

“Miskien sal ons eendag vir jou ’n olifant kan kry,” se sy. “En perskes ook. Maar vertel eers wat jy in ons dorp gaan maak het.”

“As jy regtig wil weet …” sê die GSR, “ek blaas
drome in kidderen se kamer.”

“Jy het drome gebláás?” sê Sophie verbaas. “Wat be-doei jy?”

“lïk droomblaser-reus,” sê die GSR. “As ander reuse
plop om mensdommes te gopsel, skuiwe ek na ander pick en blaas drome in slapende kidderen se venster. Mooi drome. Liefvolle, goue drome. Drome wat kidde-rcn gelukkig maak.”

“Wag so ’n bietjie,” sê Sophie. “Waar kry jy die
kamtige drome?”

“Ek raap en skaap hulle bymekaar,” sê die GSR en vvys met ’n hand na die rye, rye flesse wat op die rakke itnan. “Ek het billiejoene drome.”

“’n Mens kan nie drome versamel nie,” sê Sophie
sticng. “’n Droom is mos nie ’n ding wat jy kan vang
me!”

“Jy sal nie verstaan,” sê die GSR mismoedig, “daar-oin wil ek jou nie vertel.”

“Ag, asseblief tog, ek sál verstaan. Ag toe! Vertel my
hoe jy drome bymekaarmaak. Vertel my alles!”

Die GSR gaan gemaklik agteroor in sy stoel sit met sy een been oor die ander gekruis, en verduidelik. “Drome,” sê hy, “baie geheimrige goeters. Hulle drywe in lug soos lig-mistige bobbeltjies. Hulle soek duriglik nlapende mensdommes.”

“Kan jy hulle sien?” vra Sophie.

“Nie dadelik,” antwoord hy.

“Hoe vang jy hulle dan as jy hulle nie eens kan sien nie?”

“Aha!” sê die GSR. “Nou kom ons by donker dui-selrige geheim.”

“Ek sê mos ek sal vir niemand sê nie!”

“Ek glo,” sê die GSR. Hy maak sy oë toe en sit ’n oomblikkie stil terwyl Sophie wag.

“’n Droom,” sê hy dan, “maak fyn flimmer-flammer geluid in naglug, so silwersag dat mensdommes dit nie hoor.”

“Kan jý dit hoor?” vra Sophie.

Die GSR wys na sy enorme ore en beweeg hulle vorentoe en agtertoe. Hy glimlag trots. “Sien jy hierdie ore?” vra hy.

“Ek kan hulle nie juis miskyk nie,” sê Sophie.

“Nou ja, hulle lyk miskien laglik vir jou, maar hulle ekstra-uitwonderlike ore. Nie ore vir neusie-optrek!”

“Beslis nie!” sê Sophie.
“Hierdie ore hoor elke piepklank en tjitter-jitter,” sê die GSR.
“Bedoel jy dat jy dinge kan hoor wat ek nie kan hoor
Bic?” vra Sophie.
“Jy so doof soos patrys geverlyk met my,” sê die GSR. “Jy hoor net stampharde klanke met oorkruipers Van jou. Maar ek hoor dl die geheimrige fluisterlinge van wereld’
“Soos wat?” vra Sophie.
“In jou wêreld hoor ek voetklappe van skilpadbesie
hh hy oor blaar loop.”
“Régtig?” Sophie raak nou beïndruk.
“Ja, en ek hoor voetklappe hard en duidelik. As skil-pmlbesie op blaar loop, klink dit klampete-klamp soos reus se voetklappe.”
“Liewe land!” sê Sophie. “Wat kan jy nog hoor?”
“Ek hoor kliets-klets gebrabbel van miere as hulle skroffel deur sand.”
“Bedoel jy dat jy miere kan hoor prááť?”
“Elke woord,” antwoord die GSR, “al verstaan ek nie hulle taal.”
“Vertel nog!” sê Sophie.
“Soms op baie helder aand,” sê die GSR, “as my ore in regte rigting draai” - en hier draai hy sy groot ore hoontoe sodat hulle na die plafon wys - “as hulle vroetel op helder nag, hoor ek veraf musiek van sterre.”
’n Eienaardige rilling gaan deur Sophie se lyf. Sy sit tjoepstil en wag om nog te hoor.
“My ore my gesê jy loer deur venster,” sê die GSR.
“Maar ek het nie ’n geluid gemaak nie!” sê Sophie. “Ek jou hart hoor. Hy doef-doef soos trommel.” “Vertel nog!” smeek Sophie.
“Ek hoor plante en bome,” sê hy. “Praat hulle?” vra Sophie.
“Praat nie eintlik nie,” sê die GSR. “Maak net klank. As ek pragtige blom afruk van stam, skree plant. Ek hoor hard die skree.”
“Agge nee, toggie!” sê Sophie. “Hoe vreeslik!”
“Plant skree net soos jy as ek arm afdraai.” “Is dit regtig wáár?” vra Sophie.
“Dink jy ek gekskeer?” vra die GSR.
“Dit is nogal moeilik om te glo!”
“Dan hou ek op,” sê die GSR skerp. “Ek nie jokker, dankie.”
“Ek is jammer!” sê Sophie. “Ek het nie bedoel jy jok nie. Ek glo jou! Dis net dat alles so onmoontlik klink.” Die GSR kyk met ’n ernstige uitdrukking na haar.
“Ek nooit vir jou jok,” verseker hy haar.
“Ek weet jy sal nie,” sê Sophie, “maar jy moet be-gryp dat dit nie maklik is om dadelik sulke fantastiese dinge te glo nie!”
“Ek verstaan,” sê die GSR.
“Vergewe my tog en vertel verder,” soebat Sophie. Hy huiwer eers en

gaan dan voort. “Bome nes blomme. As ek met byl kap teen boomstam, hoor ek geluid
diep uit boom se hart.”
“Watse geluid?” vra Sophie.
“Angsvolle steune,” sê die GSR, “soos ou man as hy doodgaan.”
Hy hou op met praat. Dis baie stil in die grot.
“Bome lewe en groei net soos ekke en jy,” vervolg hy ná ’n ruk. “Blomme en plante ook.”
Hy sit nou penorent op die stoel, sy hande styf oor sy
bors vasgeklem. Dan verhelder sy gesig en sy oë word rond en blink soos twee groot sterre.
“Sukke wondervolle en ook viesaaklige geluide wat ek hoor!” sê hy. “Party jy nie wil hoor. Maar anner mooiste, liefierige musiek.”
Hy raak skoon opgewonde by die herinnering. Sy ge-sig straal en sy stem raak dromerig.
“Vertel nog,” fluister Sophie.
“Jy moet muisiekiekies hoor tjitter,” sê hy. “Klein muisiekiekies kletter aldurig met mekaar en ek hoor Hulle duidelik soos eie stem.”
“Wat sê hulle?” vra Sophie.
“Net muisiekiekies weet dit,” sê hy. “Spinnebekke kletter ook baie. Jy sal nie glo, maar spinnebekke groot ikmnerbekke. En as hulle web spin, sing hulle. Hulle ling mooier as dragtigaal.”
“Wat hoor jy nog?” por Sophie hom aan.
“Ruspes een van grootste bekpraters,” sê die GSR. “Wat gesels hulle?” vra Sophie.
“Hulle baklei heeldag oor wie mooiste lapskoener
gaan wees. Dis al waaroor hulle kletter.”
“Sweef daar op die oomblik ’n droom hier rond?”
vra Sophie.
Die GSR roer sy ore diékant toe en dáárdie kant toe en luister aandagtig. Hy skud sy kop. “Hier nie drome,” se hy.
“Net in flesse. Daar spesinjale plek vir droom vang.
Hulle kom nie na Reuseland.”
“Hoe vang jy hulle?” vra Sophie. “Ek bedoel waarmee?”
“Nes jy lapskoeners vang,” antwoord die GSR. “Met net.” Hy staan op, loop na die hoek van die grot waar daar ’n lang paal staan. Aan die punt van die paal is ’n
net. “Hierdie droomvangnet,” sê hy en gryp die paal in sy een hand vas. “Elke oggend gaan ek uit en gryp nuwe drome vir flesse.”
Skielik verloor hy alle belangstelling in die gesprek. “Ek raserig honger,” kondig hy aan. “Dit tyd vir eetgoed.”

8. SNOZZCUMBERS

‘But if you don’t eat people like all the others,’ Sophie said, ‘then what do you live on?’
‘That is a squelching tricky problem around here,’ the BFG answered. ‘In this sloshflunking Giant Country, happy eats like pineapples and pigwinkles is simply not growing. Nothing is growing except for one extremely icky-poo vegetable. It is called the snozzcumber.’
‘The snozzcumber!’ cried Sophie. ‘There’s no such thing.’
The BFG looked at Sophie and smiled, showing about twenty of his square white teeth. ‘Yesterday,’ he said, ‘we was not believing in giants, was we? Today we is not believing in snozzcumbers. Just because we happen not to have actually seen something with our own two little winkles, we think it is not existing. What about for instance the great squizzly scotch-hopper?’
‘I beg your pardon?’ Sophie said.
‘And the humplecrimp?’
‘What’s that?’ Sophie said.
‘And the wraprascal?’
‘The what?’ Sophie said.
‘And the crumpscoddle?’
‘Are they animals?’ Sophie asked.
‘They is common animals,’ said the BFG contemptuously. ‘I is not a very know-all giant myself, but it seems to me that you is an absolutely know-nothing human bean. Your brain is full of rotten-wool.’
‘You mean cotton-wool,’ Sophie said.
‘What I mean and what I say is two different things,’ the BFG announced rather grandly. ‘I will now show you a snozzcumber.’
The BFG flung open a massive cupboard and took out the weirdest-looking thing Sophie had ever seen. It was about half as long again as an ordinary man but was much thicker. It was as thick around its girth as a perambulator. It was black with white stripes along its length. And it was covered all over with coarse knobbles.
‘Here is the repulsant snozzcumber!’ cried the BFG, waving it about. ‘I squoggle it! I mispise it! I dispunge it! But because I is refusing to gobble up human beans like the other giants, I must spend my life guzzling up icky-poo snozzcumbers instead. If l don’t, I will be nothing but skin and groans.’
‘You mean skin and bones,’ Sophie said.
‘I know it is bones,’ the BFG said. ‘But please understand that I cannot be helping it if I sometimes is saying things a little squiggly. I is trying

my very best all the time.' The Big Friendly Giant looked suddenly so forlorn that Sophie got quite upset.
'I'm sorry,' she said. 'I didn't mean to be rude.'
'There never was any schools to teach me talking in Giant Country,' the BFG said sadly.
'But couldn't your mother have taught you?' Sophie asked.
'My mother!' cried the BFG. 'Giants don't have mothers! Surely you is knowing that.'
'I did notknow that,' Sophie said.
'Whoever heard of a woman giant!' shouted the BFG, waving the snozzcumber around his head like a lasso. 'There never was a woman giant! And there never will be one. Giants is always men!'
Sophie felt herself getting a little muddled. 'In that case,' she said, 'how were you born?'
'Giants isn't born,' the BFG answered. 'Giants appears and that's all there is to it. They simply appears, the same way as the sun and the stars.'
'And when did you appear?' Sophie asked.
'Now how on earth could I be knowing a thing like that?' said the BFG. 'It was so long ago I couldn't count.'
'You mean you don't even know how old you are?'
'No giant is knowing that,' the BFG said. 'All I is knowing about myself is that I is very old, very very old and crumply. Perhaps as old as the earth.'
'What happens when a giant dies?' Sophie asked.
'Giants is never dying,' the BFG answered. 'Sometimes and quite suddenly, a giant is disappearing and nobody is ever knowing where he goes to. But mostly us giants is simply going on and on like whiffsy time-twiddlers.'
The BFG was still holding the awesome snozzcumber in his right hand, and now he put one end into his mouth and bit off a huge hunk of it. He started crunching it up and the noise he made was like the crunching of lumps of ice.
'It's filthing!' he spluttered, speaking with his mouth full and spraying large pieces of snozzcumber like bullets in Sophie's direction. Sophie hopped around on the table-top, ducking out of the way.
'It's disgusterous!' the BFG gurgled. 'It's sickable! It's rotsome! It's maggotwise! Try it yourself, this foulsome snozzcumber!'
'No, thank you,' Sophie said, backing away.
'It's all you're going to be guzzling around here from now on so you might as well get used to it,' said the BFG. 'Go on, you snipsy little winkle, have a go!'
Sophie took a small nibble. 'Uggggggggh!' she spluttered. 'Oh no! Oh gosh! Oh help!' She spat it out quickly. 'It tastes of frogskins!' she

gasped. ‘And rotten fish!’
‘Worse than that!’ cried the BFG, roaring with laughter. ‘To me it is tasting of clockcoaches and slimewanglers!’
‘Do we really have to eat it?’ Sophie said.
‘You do unless you is wanting to become so thin you will be disappearing into a thick ear.’
‘Into thin air,’ Sophie said. ‘A thick ear is something quite different.’
Once again that sad winsome look came into the BFG’s eyes. ‘Words,’ he said, ‘is oh such a twitch-tickling problem to me all my life. So you must simply try to be patient and stop squibbling. As I am telling you before, I know exactly what words I am wanting to say, but somehow or other they is always getting squiff-squiddled around.’
‘That happens to everyone,’ Sophie said.
‘Not like it happens to me,’ the BFG said. ‘I is speaking the most terrible wigglish.’
‘I think you speak beautifully,’ Sophie said.
‘You do?’ cried the BFG, suddenly brightening. ‘You really do?’
‘Simply beautifully,’ Sophie repeated.
‘Well, that is the nicest present anybody is ever giving me in my whole life!’ cried the BFG. ‘Are you sure you is not twiddling my leg?’
‘Of course not,’ Sophie said. ‘I just love the way you talk.’
‘How wondercrump!’ cried the BFG, still beaming. ‘How whoopsey-splunkers! How absolutely squiffling! I is all of a stutter.’
‘Listen,’ Sophie said. ‘We don’t have to eat snozzcumbers. In the fields around our village there are all sorts of lovely vegetables like cauliflowers and carrots. Why don’t you get some of those next time you go visiting?’
The BFG raised his great head proudly in the air. ‘I is a very honourable giant,’ he said. ‘I would rather be chewing up rotsome snozzcumbers than snitching things from other people.’
‘You stole me,’ Sophie said.
‘I did not steal you very much,’ said the BFG, smiling gently. ‘After all, you is only a tiny little girl.’

8. Snorkommers

"As jy nie mense eet soos die ander reuse nie, wat eet jy dan?" vra Sophie.
"Dis 'n raai-raai-riepie darie," sê die Groot Sagmoedige Reus. "In Reuseland daar nie sukke vrolike goeters soos waatpetatte en varktappels nie. Amper niks groei hier - net snorkommers - nare-rare groente."
"Snorkommers!" roep Sophie uit. "Daar bcstaan nie so iets nie!"
Die GSR kyk na Sophie en glimlag sodat omtrent twintig van sy groot vierkantige tande sigbaar is.
"More, oormóre," sê hy, "het jy nie aan reus geglo. Gister glo jy nie snorkommers. Net oordat jou eie oogkykers dit nie sien, jy nie glo. Het jy al gehoor van pie-pende springkorse?"
"Ekskuus?"
"En kruipvaatjies?" "Wat is dit?"
"En van die wroepelwrappel?"
"Die wát?"
"En die brobbelkat?"
"Is hulle diére?" vra Sophie verbaas.
"Gewóne dierklasies," sê die GSR neerhalend. "Ek nou nie groot-weet reus, maar dit lyk my jy heeltemal nie-weet mensdomme. Jou kop vol muisvere."
"Jy bedoel muisneste," korrigeer Sophie hom.
"Wat ek bedoel en wat ek sê twee verskillende din-ge," sê die GSR ewe deftig. "Ek wys jou snor kommers."
Hy maak 'n massiewe kas oop en haal die eienaardig-Hie ding daaruit. Dis anderhalf die lengte van 'n gewone man maar baie dikker. Die omtrek is soos die van 'n trekkerwiel. Die ding is swart met wit strepe in die lengte af en dis oortrek met growwe knoetse.
"Hierdié oessmaaklike snorkommer," sê die GSR en waai dit in die lug rond. "Ek pestereer dit! Ek mishaag ilit! Maar oordat ek nie mensdommes vreet soos ander reuse, moet ek my lewe ommaak deur onwelsmaaklike snorkommers te verslobber. As ek dit nie doen, ek gister, eergister net vel en stene."
"Jy bedoel vel en béne!" sê Sophie.
"Ek wéét bene," sê die GSR, "maar asseblief - ver staan tog - ek kan nie help as ek kom en skreef brabbel. Ek perbeer my goedste." Die GSR lyk ineens so hartseer dat Sophie skoon ontsteld is.
"Ek is jammer," sê sy, "dit was baie onbedagsaam van my."
"Daar nie skole in Reuseland wat my kan leer reg brabbel," sê hy droewig.

“Maar kon jou ma jou dan nie geleer het nie?” vra
Sophie.
“My má!” Die GSR is uit die veld geslaan. “Reuse het nie ma! Dit weet jy!”
“Ek weet dit nié,” sê Sophie.
“Wie het gehoor van vróú-reus!” skree die GSR en swaai die snorkommer soos ’n vangriem in die lug rond. “Daar was nog nooit vrou-reus! En daar sal ook nie wees! Reuse altyd man!”
Sophie voel heeltemal deurmekaar gepraat. “Sê my dan, hoe is jy gebore?”
“Reuse nie gebore! Reuse net hier! Kom net hier soos son en maan en sterre.”
“En wanneer het jy hier gekom?” vra die nuuskierige
Sophie.
“Hoe moet ek weet? Dit so lank gelede ek kan nie meer tel.”
“Bedoel jy jy weet nie eens hoe oud jy is nie?”
“Reuse weet nie persies hoe oud,” sê die GSR. “Maar ek weet ek oud, baie, baie oud en verkrummel. Miskien so oud soos aarde.”
“Wat gebeur as ’n reus doodgaan?” wil Sophie weet.
“Reuse gaan nie dood,” antwoord die GSR. “Een-maal verdwyn reus en niemand weet waarheen. Maar meeste van tyd gaan ons aan soos ewigduurlike tyd—
skieters.”
Die GSR hou die snorkommer nog steeds in sy hand vat, Nou sit hy die een punt daarvan in sy mond en hap ’n groot stuk daaruit. Hy kou en dit klink kompleet soos die gekraak van groot stukke ys.
“Dit aakvieslik,” sê hy en groot stukke snorkommer spat soos koeëls in Sophie se rigting. Sy spring op die tafel rond en koes so goed sy kan.
“Dit besmettend!” sê hy. “Dit siekhelpens! Dit vrotterig! Dit maaierig! Perbeer self - proesel bietjie van aakvieslike snorkommer!”
“Nee dankie,” sê Sophie en tree agteruit.
“Dit al wat jy hier kan gopsel, so jy moet gewoond raak,” sê hy. “Toe nou, jou snipsige klein wimpelkie. Proesel!”
Sophie neem ’n mondjievol. “Sie-aag-sie-gaaaa!” En sy spoeg die stukke uit. “Dit smaak na paddavelle en
… en … en na vrot vis!” proes sy.
“Baie erger!” sê die GSR en brul soos hy lag. “Dit proesel vir my van kotterokke en slymende knewels.”
“Moet ons dit regtig eet?” vra Sophie wat maar bra min lus het vir snorkommers.
“Jy moet, anders word jy so dun dat jy in verskiet verdwyn.”
“Jy bedoel ek sal in die niet verdwyn,” sê Sophie.
Weer lyk die GSR afgehaal en treurig. “Woorde,” sê hy, “hele lewe al probleem. Jy moet versool en ophou stry. Ek wéét wat ek wil sê, maar

woorde loop onder mekaar."
"Dit gebeur maar met almal," troos Sophie.
"Maar nie so erg as by my," sê die GSR. "Ek praat laglike kafrikaans."
"Ek dink jy praat pragtig!" sê Sophie.
"Regtig?" Die GSR lyk baie in sy skik. "Dink jy reg
tig so?"
"Regtig. Jy praat pragtig," sê Sophie.
"Dit besweerlik mooiste persentasie wat ek nog gekry het!" sê die GSR opgewonde. "Jy seker jy trek nie my arm?"
"Natuurlik nie," hou Sophie vol. "Ek hou baie van
jou pratery!"
"Hoe pleksieperfeksie!" sê die reus en glimlag. "Hoe wonderbedaarlik! Hoe absoluut blinker! Ek skoon Npraakvol!"
"Luister 'n bietjie," sê Sophie, "ons hoef nie snorkommers te eet nie. In ons dorp groei daar allerhande heerlike groente soos blomkool en wortels en tamaties. Hoekom vat jy nie daarvan as jy weer soontoe gaan nie?"
Die GSR lig trots sy kop. "Ek eervolle reus. Ek eet
licwer viesaaklige snorkommers as om mensdommes-goed te gaps."
"Jy het mý gegaps!" herinner Sophie hom.
"Ek jou nie so báie gegaps," sê hy en grinnik. "Per slot van take jy maar piepelklein mensdomme."

9. THE BLOODBOTTLER

Suddenly, a tremendous thumping noise came from outside the cave entrance and a voice like thunder shouted, ‘Runt! Is you there, Runt? I is hearing you jabbeling! Who is you jabbeling to, Runt?’
‘Look out!’ cried the BFG. ‘It’s the Bloodbottler!’ But before he had finished speaking, the stone was rolled aside and a fifty-foot giant, more than twice as tall and wide as the BFG, came striding into the cave. He was naked except for a dirty little piece of cloth around his bottom.
Sophie was on the table-top. The enormous partly eaten snozzcumber was lying near her. She ducked behind it.
The creature came clumping into the cave and stood towering over the BFG. ‘Who was you jabbeling to in here just now?’ he boomed.
‘I is jabbeling to myself,’ the BFG answered.
‘Pilfflefizz!’ shouted the Bloodbottler. ‘Bugswallop!’ he boomed. ‘You is talking to a human bean, that’s what I is thinking!’
‘No no!’ cried the BFG.
‘Yus yus!’ boomed the Bloodbottler. ‘I is guessing you has snitched away a human bean and brought it back to your bunghole as a pet! So now I is winkling it out and guzzling it as extra snacks before my supper!’
The poor BFG was very nervous. ‘There’s n-no one in here,’ he stammered. ‘W-why don’t you l-leave me alone?’
The Bloodbottler pointed a finger as large as a tree-trunk at the BFG. ‘Runty little scumscrewer!’ he shouted. ‘Piffling little swishfiggler! Squimpy little bottlewart! Prunty little pogswizzler! I is now going to search the primroses!’ He grabbed the BFG by the arm. ‘And you is going to help me do it. Us together is going to winkle out this tasteful little human bean!’ he shouted.
The BFG had intended to whisk Sophie off the table as soon as he got the chance and hide her behind his back, but now there was no hope of doing this. Sophie peered around the chewed-off end of the enormous snozzcumber, watching the two giants as they moved away down the cave. The Bloodbottler was a gruesome sight. His skin was reddish-brown. There was black hair sprouting on his chest and arms and on his stomach. The hair on his head was long and dark and tangled. His foul face was round and squashy-looking. The eyes were tiny black holes. The nose was small and flat. But the mouth was huge. It spread right across the face almost ear to ear, and it had lips that were like two gigantic purple frankfurters lying one on top of the other. Craggy yellow teeth stuck out between the two purple

frankfurter lips, and rivers of spit ran down over the chin.
It was not in the least difficult to believe that this ghastly brute ate men, women and children every night.
The Bloodbottler, still holding the BFG by the arm, was examining the rows and rows of bottles. 'You and your pibbling bottles!' he shouted. 'What is you putting in them?'
'Nothing that would interest you,' the BFG answered. 'You is only interested in guzzling human beans.'
'And you is dotty as a dogswoggler!' cried the Bloodbottler.
Soon the Bloodbottler would be coming back, Sophie told herself, and he was bound to search the table-top. But she couldn't possibly jump off the table. It was twelve feet high. She'd break a leg. The snozzcumber, although it was as thick as a perambulator, was not going to hide her if the Bloodbottler
picked it up. She examined the chewed-off end. It had large seeds in the middle, each one as big as a melon. They were embedded in soft slimy stuff. Taking care to stay out of sight, Sophie reached forward and scooped away half a dozen of these seeds. This left a hole in the middle of the snozzcumber large enough for her to crouch in so long as she rolled herself up into a ball. She crawled into it. It was a wet and slimy hiding-place, but what did that matter if it was going to save her from being eaten.
The Bloodbottler and the BFG were coming back towards the table now. The BFG was nearly fainting with fear. Any moment, he was telling himself, Sophie would be discovered and eaten.
Suddenly, the Bloodbottler grabbed the half-eaten snozzcumber. The BFG stared at the bare table. Sophie, where is you? he thought desperately. You cannot possibly be jumpelling off that high table, so where is you hiding, Sophie?
'So this is the filthing rotsome glubbage you is eating!' boomed the Bloodbottler, holding up the partly eaten snozzcumber. 'You must be cockles to be guzzling such rubbsquash!'
For a moment, the Bloodbottler seemed to have forgotten about his search for Sophie. The BFG decided to lead him further off the track. 'That is the scrumdiddlyumptious snozzcumber,' he said. 'I is guzzling it gleefully every night and day. Is you never trying a snozzcumber, Bloodbottler?'
'Human beans is juicier,' the Bloodbottler said.
'You is talking rommytot,' the BFG said, growing braver by the second. He was thinking that if only he could get the Bloodbottler to take one bite of the repulsive vegetable, the sheer foulness of its flavour would send him bellowing out of the cave. 'I is happy to let you sample it,' the BFG went on. 'But please, when you see how truly glumptious it is, do not be guzzling the whole thing. Leave me a little

snitchet for my supper.'

The Bloodbottler stared suspiciously with small piggy eyes at the snozzcumber.

Sophie, crouching inside the chewed-off end, began to tremble all over.

'You is not switchfiddling me, is you?' said the Bloodbottler.

'Never!' cried the BFG passionately. 'Take a bite and I am positive you will be shouting out oh how scrumdiddlyumptious this wonderveg is!'

The BFG could see the greedy Bloodbottler's mouth beginning to water more than ever at the prospect of extra food. 'Vegitibbles is very good for you,' he went on. 'It is not healthsome always to be eating meaty things.'

'Just this once,' the Bloodbottler said, 'I is going to taste these rotsome eats of yours. But I is warning you that if it is filthsome, I is smashing it over your sludgy little head!'

He picked up the snozzcumber.

He began raising it on its long journey to his mouth, some fifty feet up in the air.

Sophie wanted to scream Don't! But that would have been an even more certain death. Crouching among the slimy seeds, she felt herself being lifted up and up and up.

Suddenly, there was a crunch as the Bloodbottler bit a huge hunk off the end. Sophie saw his yellow teeth clamping together, a few inches from her head. Then there was utter darkness. She was in his mouth. She caught a whiff of his evil-smelling breath. It stank of bad meat. She waited for the teeth to go crunch once more. She prayed that she would be killed quickly.

'Eeeeeowtch!' roared the Bloodbottler. 'Ughbwelch! Ieeeech!' And then he spat.

All of the great lumps of snozzcumber that were in his mouth, as well as Sophie herself, went shooting out across the cave.

If Sophie had struck the stony wall of the cave, she would most certainly have been killed. Instead, she hit the soft folds of the BFG's black cloak hanging against the wall. She dropped to the ground, half-stunned. She crawled under the hem of the cloak and there she crouched.

'You little swinebuggler!' roared the Bloodbottler. 'You little pigswiller!' He rushed at the BFG and smashed what was left of the snozzcumber over his head. Fragments of the filthy vegetable splashed all over the cave.

'You is not loving it?' the BFG asked innocently, rubbing his head.

'Loving it!' yelled the Bloodbottler. 'That is the most disgusterous taste that is ever touching my teeth! You must be buggies to be swalloping slutch like that! Every night you could be galloping off happy as a

hamburger and gobbling juicy human beans!'
'Eating human beans is wrong and evil,' the BFG said.
'It is guzzly and glumptious!' shouted the Bloodbottler. 'And tonight I is galloping off to Chile to swobble a few human Chile beans. Is you wishing to know why I is choosing Chile?'
'I is not wishing to know anything,' the BFG said, very dignified.
'I is choosing Chile,' the Bloodbottler said, 'because I is fed up with the taste of Esquimos. It is important I has plenty of cold eats in this scuddling hot weather, and the next coldest thing to an Esquimo is a Chile bean. Human beans from Chile is very chilly.'
'Horrible,' the BFG said. 'You ought to be ashamed.'
'Other giants is all saying they is wanting to gallop off to England tonight to guzzle school-chiddlers,' the Bloodbottler said. 'I is very fond indeed of English school-chiddlers. They has a nice inky-booky flavour. Perhaps I will change my mind and go to England with them.'
'You is disgusting,' the BFG said.
'And you is an insult to the giant peoples!' shouted the Bloodbottler. 'You is not fit to be a giant! You is a squinky little squiddler! You is a pibbling little pitsqueak! You is a … cream puffnut!'
With that, the horrible Bloodbottling Giant strode out of the cave. The BFG ran to the cave entrance and quickly rolled the stone back into place.
'Sophie,' he whispered. 'Sophie, where is you, Sophie?'
Sophie emerged from under the hem of the black cloak. 'I'm here,' she said.
The BFG picked her up and held her tenderly in the palm of his hand. 'Oh, I is so happy to be finding you all in one lump!' he said.
'I was in his mouth,' Sophie said.
'You was what!' cried the BFG.
Sophie told him what had happened.
'And there I was telling him to eat the filthsome snozzcumber and you was all the time inside it!' the BFG cried.
'Not much fun,' Sophie said.
'Just look at you, you poor little chiddler!' cried the BFG. 'You is all covered in snozzcumber and giant spit.' He set about cleaning her up as best he could. 'I is hating those other giants more than ever now,' he said. 'You know what I should like?'
'What?' Sophie said.
'I should like to find a way of disappearing them, every single one.'
'I'd be glad to help you,' Sophie said. 'Let me see if I can't think up a way of doing it.'

9. Die Bloedslurper

Skielik is daar ’n geweldige stampgeluid, en ’n stem soos donderweer bulder: “Jou miskrabele bog! Jy daar, bog! Ek hoor jou brabbel. Met wie brabbel jy, bog?” “Oppas,” waarsku die Groot Sagmoedige Reus met
’n fluisterstem. “Dit Bloedslurper!”
Voor hy verder kan praat, word die rotsdeur wegge-stoot en ’n sewentien meter lange reus, meer as twee keer so lank soos die GSR, staan daar. Hy is kaal afgesien van die klein rompie onder om sy maag.
Sophie sit nog steeds bo-op die tafel. Die yslike snor
kommer lê langs haar en sy duik agter die ding weg.
Die enorme kreatuur kom ingestrompel en toring bo die GSR uit. “Met wie brabbel jy?” herhaal hy.
“Met myself,” antwoord die GSR.
“Kaf-twak!” skree die Bloedslurper. “Kaf-twak! Jy brabbel met mensdomme, so dink ék.”
“Nee, nee!” sê die GSR benoud.
“Ja, ja!” bulder die Bloedslurper. “Ek dink jy het mensdomme gegaps en gebring na grot vir troeteltier. Ek gaan uitruik en opgopsel vir snoepsie voor ete!”
Die arme GSR is nou baie senuweeagtig. “Daar … daar … niks hier … hier nie,” stamel hy.
Die Bloedslurper wys met sy tamaai voorvinger - dis so dik soos ’n ankerpaal - na die GSR en sê: “Klein bog! Jy niksneut! Simpele klein fopspeen! Askruiper! Ek soek en soek tot ek mensdomme kry!”
Die GSR was van plan om so gou moontlik vir
Sophie van die tafel af te raap en agter sy rug weg te steek, maar hy kry nie ’n kans nie. Sophie loer om die afgevrete kant van die enorme snorkommer en kyk hoe die twee reuse in die grot rondstap. Die Bloedslurper is
’n weersinwekkende gedrog. Sy vel is rooibruin. Swart hare steek soos penne uit sy bors en maag. Die hare op sy kop is lank en swart en aanmckaar gekoek. Sy aaklige gesig is rond en plat en die oë is net twee klein swart gaatjies. Die neus is klein en baie plat, maar die mond is ontstellend groot. Dit strek van oor tot oor, en die lippe lyk na twee yslike worse wat bo-op mekaar le. Af-gebreekte geel tande steek tussen die worslippe uit en kwyl drup oor sy ken.
Dis glad nie moeilik om te glo dat hierdie afskuwelike
monster elke nag mans en vrouens en kinders opeet nie!
Die Bloedslurper, wat die GSR nog steeds aan die arm vashou,

ondersoek nou die rye en rye flesse wat op die rakke staan. “Jy en jou miskrabele flesse!” sê hy. “Wat gooi jy daarin?”
“Niks wat jou sal inteveseer,” sê die GSR. “Jy net inteveseer om mensdommes op te gopsel.”
“Ag, jy so mal soos kolhaas se broer!” sê Bloed
slurper. Hy’s nou-nou by die tafel, dink Sophie, en dan sal hy die tafel ondersoek en my kry! Afspring kan sy nie. Daarvoor is die tafel glad te hoog. Netnou breek sy ’n been of straks nog haar nek as sy dit waag. En al is die snorkommer so dik soos ’n trekkerwiel sal sy nie meer daaragter kan wegkruip as die Bloedslurper dit optel nie. Sy beskou die afgevrete punt. Daar is groot pitte binne-in die snorkommer. Elke pit is so groot soos ’n spanspek. Hulle sit vas in die slymerige snorkommer. Versigtig, sodat hulle haar nie gewaar nie, krap sy so ’n stuk of agt van die pitte weg. Daar is nou ’n gat binne-in die snorkommer. As sy opkrul, sal daar net mooi genoeg plek vir haar wees om weg te kruip. Dis koud en ilymerig en nat, maar solank dit keer dat die Bloed slurper haar raaksien, is dit goed.
Die Bloedslurper en die GSR kom al nader aan die
tafel. Die GSR is byna flou van ontsteltenis, bekom-Ricmis en vrees. Enige oomblik, so dink hy, gaan die Bloedslurper Sophie raaksien en haar insluk.
Skielik gryp die Bloedslurper die snorkommer in sy
hand. Die GSR staar met beklemming na die leë tafel. Sophie, waar jy? dink hy mismoedig. Jy het tog nie geSping-sprang van tafel? Waar jy, my klein Sophie?
“Dit smerige afval wat jy gaffel?” vra die Bloedslur
per. “Jy bietjie nie reg om sukke viesaaklige goed te gupsel.”
Dit lyk asof die Bloedslurper sy soektog gaan staak.
Om sy aandag af te trek, sê die GSR: “Dit wonder-Ickker smaakproesel, smekheerlike snorkommer. Ek gopsel dit elke oggend en nag. Het jy dit nooit gegop-Nt*l, Bloedslurper? Dit baie sappervol.”
“Mensdommes baie meer sappervol,” sê die Bloed
slurper.
“Jy praat agteruit.”
Die GSR word al dapperder. Hy meen dat as hy die Bloedslurper kan oorreed om één hap van die aaklige Nimrkommer te neem, die blote smaak daarvan hom proesend uit die grot sal jaag. “Jy kan gerus hapsel neem,” sê hy ewe onskuldig. “Maar asseblief, nie alles opvreet. Hou krieweltjie vir my ete.”
Die Bloedslurper kyk met groot agterdog na die snor
kommer.
Sophie, wat binne-in die snorkommer is, bewe van angs.
“Jy seker jy verskil my nie?” vra die Bloedslurper.
“Nooit!” sê die GSR beslis. “Neem net een hapsel en jy blikoomblik

juig oor hoe lekkersmekker die swart ding proesel.”
Die GSR sien hoe die Bloedslurper se kwyl begin stroom by die gedagte aan ekstra kos. “Dit ongesondig om net vleisgoed te vreet,” sê die GSR. “Groente-goed baie gesonderig.”
“Net hierdie een keer,” sê die Bloedslurper, “gaan ek die vrotsotterige ding vreet. Maar ek waskuur jou as dit viesaaklig proesel, slaan ek dit op jou sotkop stukkend!”
Hy tel die snorkommer op. Hy lig dit hoog op vir die lang reis na sy mond so sewentien meter van die grond af.
Sophie wil skree: Moenie! Maar dan sal hy haar mos in elk geval sien en opeet. Opgekrul in die slymerige snorkommer voel sy hoe sy opstyg.
Skielik is daar ’n geweldige kraak! soos die Bloedslur per ’n groot hap neem. Sophie sien sy tande opmekaar klamp so ’n paar sentimeters van haar kop af. Dan is al-les pikdonker. Sy is nou binne-in sy mond. Sy ruik die stankende asem. Sy wag in vrees dat die tande nog ’n keer gaan kners. Sy bid dat sy tog maar gou moet doodgaan.
“ eeeeauuufoesa !” bulder die Bloedslurper. “Soe! Ga! Foe!” Toe spoeg hy.
Al die groot stukke snorkommer wat in sy mond was
- natuurlik met Sophie daartussen - skiet oor die grot.
As Sophie teen die harde muur van die grot geval het, sou sy sekerlik dood gewees het. Maar gelukkig land sy in die sagte voue van die GSR se swart mantel wat teen die muur hang. Sy voel flou en gekneus en lam in haar bene, maar kruip gou diep onder die voue van die mantel in en lê doodstil.
“Jou bobbejaankuiken!” raas die Bloedslurper. “Jou
… jou … pesterasie!” Hy loop na die GSR en slaan die res van die snorkommer op sy kop stukkend. Snor-kommerstukke spat oor die grot.
“Hou jy nie daarvan?” vra die GSR onskuldig.
“Hou daarvan?” bulder die Bloedslurper. “Dit aak-miarste ding wat ek nog ooit proesel! Jy kan mensdommes gopsel en jy liefie dit!”
“Mensdommes gopsel verkeerd en boos,” sê die GSR
ernstig.
“Dit smeklekker en gesondig!” stry die Bloedslurper. “Vannag galop ek na Friesland om mensdommes van Friesland te vreet. Weet jy hoekom?”
“Ek stel nie verlang,” sê die GSR.
“Ek gaan na Friesland want ek vieslik vir proesel van Eskimos. Belangrik om koue kosse te vreet in verskim-mdde warm weer. Frieslander amper koud soos Eskimo. Fries van Friesland baie vrieserig.”
“Skaam jou!” sê die GSR.

“Ander reuse skuiwe vannag na Engeland om skool kidderen te vreet. Ek liefie ook skoolkidderen van En geland. Lekker ink-boekerige proesel. Miskien ek gaa saam met hulle.”
“Jy aakvieslik,” sê die GSR.
“En jy belediging vir reusenasie!” skree die Bloed slurper. “Jy nie ’n regte reus! Jy siekerige piepjas! Jy kafstorie! Jy … jy … stoperige koeksister!”
En met daardie woorde loop hy met lang tree by die
grot uit. Die GSR hardloop agter hom aan en stoot die rotsdeur weer in posisie.
“Sophie,” fluister hy. “Sophie, waar jy?”
Sophie verskyn onder die voue van die groot swart mantel.
“Hier is ek,” sê sy.
“O, ek so bly jy nog een stukkie!” sê die GSR verlig. “Ek was binne-in sy mond!” sê Sophie.
“Jy wát?” skree die verbaasde GSR.
Sophie vertel hom haarfyn wat alles gebeur het.
“En ek sê hom snorkommer te gopsel en jy al die tyd tnnne!” Die GSR is baie ontsteld.
“Ek moet erken,” sê Sophie, “dit was ’n nare onderVinding.”
“Kyk net na jou, jou arme klein kidderen!” sê die
GSR. “Jy besmeer van snorkommer en reus-poegsel!” Hv vee haar af so goed hy kan. “Ek pestereer daardie reuse nog meer as more,” sê hy. “Weet jy wat wens ekkc?”
“Wat?” vra Sophie.
“Dat hulle almal verdwyn, elke skottelbottel van
hulle!”
“Ek sal jou help om dit reg te kry,” belowe Sophie. “Gee my net kans om te dink. Ons sal wel ’n plan maak.”

10. FROBSCOTTLE AND WHIZZPOPPERS

By now Sophie was beginning to feel not only extremely hungry, but very thirsty as well. Had she been at home she would have finished her breakfast long ago.
‘Are you sure there’s nothing else to eat around here except those disgusting smelly snozzcumbers?’ she asked.
‘Not even a fizzwinkel,’ answered the Big Friendly Giant.
‘In that case, may I please have a little water?’ she said.
‘Water?’ said the BFG, frowning mightily. ‘What is water?’
‘We drink it,’ Sophie said. ‘What do you drink?’
‘Frobscottle,’ announced the BFG. ‘All giants is drinking frobscottle.’
‘Is it as nasty as your snozzcumbers?’ Sophie asked.
‘Nasty!’ cried the BFG. ‘Never is it nasty! Frobscottle is sweet and jumbly!’ He got up from his chair and went to a second huge cupboard. He opened it and took out a glass bottle that must have been six feet tall. The liquid inside it was pale green, and the bottle was half full.
‘Here is frobscottle!’ he cried, holding the bottle up proud and high, as though it contained some rare wine. ‘Delumptious fizzy frobscottle!’ he shouted. He gave it a shake and the green stuff began to fizz like mad.
‘But look! It’s fizzing the wrong way!’ Sophie cried. And indeed it was. The bubbles, instead of travelling upwards and bursting on the surface, were shooting downwards and bursting at the bottom. A pale green frothy fizz was forming at the bottom of the bottle.
‘What on earth is you meaning the wrong way?’ asked the BFG.
‘In our fizzy drinks,’ Sophie said, ‘the bubbles always go up and burst at the top.’
‘Upwardsis the wrong way!’ cried the BFG. ‘You mustn’t ever be having the bubbles going upwards! That the most flushbunking rubbish I ever is hearing!’
‘Why do you say that?’ Sophie asked.
‘You is asking me why?’ cried the BFG, waving the enormous bottle around as though he were conducting an orchestra. ‘You is actually meaning to tell me you cannot see why it is a scrotty mistake to have the bubbles flying up instead of down?’
‘You said it was flushbunking. Now you say it’s scrotty. Which is it?’ Sophie asked politely.
‘Both!’ cried the BFG. ‘It is a flushbunking and a scrotty mistake to let the bubbles go upwards! If you can’t see why, you must be as quacky

as a duckhound! By ringo, your head must be so full of frogsquinkers and buzzwangles, I is frittered if I know how you can think at all!'
'Why shouldn't the bubbles go upward?' Sophie asked.
'I will explain,' said the BFG. 'But tell me first what name is you calling your frobscottle by?'
'One is Coke,' Sophie said. 'Another is Pepsi. There are lots of them.'
'And the bubbles is all going up?'
'They all go up,' Sophie said.
'Catasterous!' cried the BFG. 'Upgoing bubbles is a catasterous disastrophe!'
'Will you please tell me why?' Sophie said.
'If you will listen carefully I will try to explain,' said the BFG. 'But your brain is so full of bugwhiffles, I doubt you will ever understand.'
'I'll do my best,' Sophie said patiently.
'Very well, then. When you is drinking this cokey drink of yours,' said the BFG, 'it is going straight down into your tummy. Is that right? Or is it left?'
'It's right,' Sophie said.
'And the bubbles is going also into your tummy. Right or left?'
'Right again,' Sophie said.
'And the bubbles is fizzing upwards?'
'Of course,' Sophie said.
'Which means,' said the BFG, 'that they will all come swishwiffling up your throat and out of your mouth and make a foulsome belchy burp!'
'That is often true,' Sophie said. 'But what's wrong with a little burp now and again? It's sort of fun.'
'Burping is filthsome,' the BFG said. 'Us giants is never doing it.'
'But with your drink,' Sophie said, 'what was it you called it?'
'Frobscottle,' said the BFG.
'With frobscottle,' Sophie said, 'the bubbles in your tummy will be going downwards and that could have a far nastier result.'
'Why nasty?' asked the BFG, frowning.
'Because,' Sophie said, blushing a little, 'if they go down instead of up, they'll be coming out somewhere else with an even louder and ruder noise.'
'A whizzpopper!' cried the BFG, beaming at her. 'Us giants is making whizzpoppers all the time! Whizzpopping is a sign of happiness. It is music in our ears! You surely is not telling me that a little whizzpopping is forbidden among human beans?'
'It is considered extremely rude,' Sophie said.
'But you is whizzpopping, is you not, now and again?' asked the BFG.
'Everyone is whizzpopping, if that's what you call it,' Sophie said. 'Kings and Queens are whizzpopping. Presidents are whizzpopping. Glamorous film stars are whizzpopping. Little babies are

whizzpopping. But where I come from, it is not polite to talk about it.'

'Redunculous!' said the BFG. 'If everyone is making whizzpoppers, then why not talk about it? We is now having a swiggle of this delicious frobscottle and you will see the happy result.' The BFG shook the bottle vigorously. The pale green stuff fizzed and bubbled. He removed the cork and took a tremendous gurgling swig.

'It's glummy!' he cried. 'I love it!'

For a few moments, the Big Friendly Giant stood quite still, and a look of absolute ecstasy began to spread over his long wrinkly face. Then suddenly the heavens opened and he let fly with a series of the loudest and rudest noises Sophie had ever heard in her life. They reverberated around the walls of the cave like thunder and the glass jars rattled on their shelves. But most astonishing of all, the force of the explosions actually lifted the enormous giant clear off his feet, like a rocket.

'Whoopee!' he cried, when he came down to earth again. 'Now thatis whizzpopping for you!'

Sophie burst out laughing. She couldn't help it.

'Have some yourself!' cried the BFG, tipping the neck of the enormous bottle towards her.

'Don't you have a cup?' Sophie said.

'No cups. Only bottle.'

Sophie opened her mouth, and very gently the BFG tipped the bottle forward and poured some of the fabulous frobscottle down her throat.

And oh gosh, how delicious it was! It was sweet and refreshing. It tasted of vanilla and cream, with just the faintest trace of raspberries on the edge of the flavour. And the bubbles were wonderful. Sophie could actually feel them bouncing and bursting all around her tummy. It was an amazing sensation. It felt as though hundreds of tiny people were dancing a jig inside her and tickling her with their toes. It was lovely.

'It's lovely!' she cried.

'Just wait,' said the BFG, flapping his ears.

Sophie could feel the bubbles travelling lower and lower down her tummy, and then suddenly, inevitably … the explosion came. The trumpets sounded and she too made the walls of the cavern ring with the sound of music and thunder.

'Bravo!' shouted the BFG, waving the bottle. 'You is very good for a beginner! Let's have some more!'

10. Bobbelbrou en wipvonke

Teen dié tyd is Sophite nie net baie honger nie, maar ook baie dors. As sy nou tuis was, sou sy al lankal ont-byt geëet het.
“Is jy heeltemal seker daar’s niks anders om te eet as daardie vieslike snorkommers nie?” vra sy.
“Nie eens trommclrmoes nie!” antwoord die Groot
Sagmoedige Reus.
Wat trommelmoes is, weet nugter, dus vra Sophie: “Mag ek dan asseblief bietjie water kry?”
“Water?” vra die GSR met ’n frons. “Wat is water?” “Dis wat ons drink as ons dors is,” antwoord Sophie.
“Wat drink julle dan?”
“Bobbelbrou,” antwoord die GSR. “Reuse almal drink bobbelbrou.”
“Smaak dit net so sleg soos snorkommers?” vra
Sophie versigtig.
“Sleg?” roep die GSR uit. “Nooit sleg! Bobbelbrou soet en sprongig!” Hy staan op, gaan na ’n ander groot kas, maak dit oop en haal ’n groot glasbottel daaruit. Die bottel is seker ’n meter hoog. Die vloeistof binne-in het ’n liggroen kleur. Die bottel is half vol.
“Hier bobbelbrou!” kondig hy trots aan en hou die bottel hoog in die lug. “Smekheerlike sprongige bobbel brou!” skree hy vrolik en skud die bottel sodat die groen vloeistof bruis en skuim.
“Haai!” skree die opgewonde Sophie. “Haai, kyk!
Die borrels trek verkéérde kant toe!” En dit is ook so. Pleks dat die borrels boontoe drywe en op die oppervlak ontplof, skiet die borrels afwaarts en ontplof op die bodem van die bottel.
“Wat verkeerde kant?” vra die verwarde GSR.
“In ons borreldrankies,” verduidelik Sophie, “trek die borrels altyd boontoe en
“Boontoe links!” sê die GSR beslis. “Bobbels trek
nie op. Grootste nonsnert wat ek hoor.” “Hoekom?” vra Sophie.
“Jy vra hoekom?” sê die ontstoke GSR en swaai die
bottel in die lug rond soos ’n dirigent met sy stokkie voor ’n orkes. “Jy sê my jy sien nie hoekom bobbels moet afgaan? Want dit skrobberig!”
“Eers het jy gesê dis nonsnert en nou sê jy dis skrob
berig. Wat is dit?”
“Albei,” sê die GSR saaklik. “Dit nonsnert én skrobberig kwakkerig soos eendhond. Gommelastiek! Jou kop so vol parragoggies en bommelbere jy nie kan dink!”
“Maar verduidelik hoekom die borrels moet afgaan en nie op nie,” vra Sophie geduldig.

“Ek verduidelik. Maar gee eers naam van julle bob
belbrou.”
“Een is Coke,” sê Sophie, “en ’n ander een is Pepsi, maar daar is nog baie ander soorte ook.”
“En bobbels gaan altyd óp?”
“Ja, die borrels gaan altyd boontoe,” beaam Sophie. “Rampstrofe!” sê die GSR. “Opstygende bobbels
ramkatterige rampstrofe.”
“Sal jy asseblíéf verduidelik waarom?” sê Sophie.
“As jy luister, sal ek sê, maar jou kop so vol kotterokke dat ek nie weet of jy beslaan.”
“Ek sal my bes doen om te verstaan,” sê Sophie.
“Goed. As jy Coke-goeters drink, gaan dit af in maag. Regs of links?”
“Regs,” sê Sophie. “Ek bedoel reg.”
“En bobbels gaan ook in maag. Regs of links?” “Reg,” sê Sophie.
“En bobbels bobbel op?” “Natuurlik,” sê Sophie.
“Dit beteken,” sê die GSR, “dat alles skuimbobbe—
lend by keelgat uitkom en aakvieslike windopbraak maak!”
“Dit gebeur soms,” erken Sophie, “maar dis mos nie so ’n groot sonde om af en toe ’n windjie te breek nie!” “Windopbraak aakvieslik,” sê die GSR afkeurend.
“Reuse doen dit nooit.”
“Maar met julle drankie?” vra Sophie. “Wat noem julle dit nou weer?”
“Bobbelbrou,” antwoord die GSR.
“Met bobbelbrou,” gaan Sophie voort, “sal die borrels in jou maag ondertoe gaan en die gevolge daarvan ksm baie onaangenaam wees!”
“Hoekom onaangenaam?” vra die GSR.
“Want,” verduidelik Sophie en bloos, “as die borrels undertoe gaan, sal hulle mos êrens moet uitkom, met ’n bme groter en onbeskofter klank!”
“’n Wipvonk!” en die GSR en glimlag breed. “Ons
reuse maak wipvonke al die tyd! Wipvonke laat reuse gclukkig voel! Dit soos musiek in ore! Wil jy vertel mensdommes maak nie wipvonke?”
“Dit word as baie onbeskof beskou,” sê Sophie.
“Maar jy maak wipvonk toe en af?”
“Almal maak wipvonke, soos jy dit noem,” sê Sophie. “Konings en koninginne maak dit, filmsterre maak dit … Klein babas maak dit. Maar waar ek van-ilaan kom, doen mens dit nooit in geselskap nie, en jy praat in elk geval nooit daaroor nie!”
“Verspotlik!” besluit die GSR. “As almal wipvonke maak, waarom praat hulle nie daarvan? Kom ons drink nou soet sprongige bobbelbrou en jy sal sien gelukkige
gevolg.” Hy skud die bottel met mening. Die groen vloeistof skuim en

borrel. Hy trek die prop uit en neem
’n groot gorrelende sluk.
“Smeklekkerrrrr!” sê hy. “Ek dit liefie!”
’n Paar oomblikke sit hy stil en sy verrimpclde gesig kry ’n uitdrukking van verrukking. Skielik volg daar ’n reeks van die hardste en onbeskofste geluide wat Sophie nog ooit gehoor het. Hulle weergalm soos donderslae deur die grot sodat die glasflesse op die rakke teenme-kaar kletter. Maar die eienaardigste van alles is dat die reeks ontploffings die yslike reus soos ’n vuurpyl van sy voete af lig.
“Joegaai!” skree hy toe sy voete weer grond vat. “Dit
*n wonderbedaarlike wipvonk darie!” Sophie kraai van die lag.
“Drink jy nou,” sê die GSR en hou die bottel skuins
na haar toe.
“Het jy nie ’n koppie of ’n glas nie?” vra sy. “Nie koppie, nie glas, net bottel,” sê die GSR.
Sophie maak haar mond wyd oop en die GSR gooi ’n bietjie van die fabelagtige bobbelbrou in haar keel af.
Hn o aardetjie, hoe heerlik is dit tog nie! Dit smaak
mi vanielje, met net ’n sweempie van aarbeigeur daarby. lin die borrels is so verfrissend! Sophie kan voel hoe hulle in haar maag stamp en spring. Dit voel kompleet Bsof honderde klein mensies dans en haar met hulle tone kielie.
“Dis heerlik!” sê sy.
“Wag bietjie,” sê die GSR en flap met sy groot ore.
Sophie voel hoe die borrels laer en laer in haar maag wik en toe … toe kom die ontploffing! Dis asof trompette blaas, en sý laat ook die grot weergalm met die gcluid van klein donderslae!
“Bravo!” juig die opgewonde GSR. Hy swaai die
bottel in die lug rond en sê: “Baie goed begin! Kom ons drink nog!”

11. JOURNEY TO DREAM COUNTRY

After the mad frobscottle party was over, Sophie settled herself again on top of the enormous table.
'You is feeling better now?' asked the Big Friendly Giant.
'Much better, thank you,' Sophie said.
'Whenever I is feeling a bit scrotty,' the BFG said, 'a few gollops of frobscottle is always making me hopscotchy again.'
'I must say it's quite an experience,' Sophie said.
'It's a razztwizzler,' the BFG said. 'It's gloriumptious.' He turned away and strode across the cave and picked up his dream-catching net. 'I is galloping off now,' he said, 'to catch some more whoppsy-whiffling dreams for my collection. I is doing this every day without missing. Is you wishing to come with me?'
'Not me, thank you very much!' Sophie said. 'Not with those other giants lurking outside!'
'I is snuggling you very cosy into the pocket of my waistcoat,' the BFG said. 'Then no one is seeing you.'
Before Sophie could protest, he had picked her up off the table and popped her into the waistcoat pocket. There was plenty of room in there. 'Is you wishing for a little hole to peep out from?' he asked her.
'There's one here already,' she said. She had found a small hole in the pocket, and when she put one eye close to it, she could see out very well indeed. She watched the BFG as he bent down and filled his suitcase with empty glass jars. He closed the lid, picked up the suitcase in one hand, took the pole with the net on the end in the other hand, and marched towards the entrance of the cave.
As soon as he was outside, the BFG set off across the great hot yellow wasteland where the blue rocks lay and the dead trees stood and where all the other giants were skulking about.
Sophie, squatting low on her heels in the pocket of the leather waistcoat, had one eye glued to the little hole. She saw the group of enormous giants about three hundred yards ahead.
'Hold your breaths!' the BFG whispered down to her. 'Cross your figglers! Here we go! We is going right past all these other giants! Is you seeing that whopping great one, the one nearest to us?'
'I see him,' Sophie whispered back, quivering.
'That is the horriblest of them all. And the biggest of them all. He is called the Fleshlumpeating Giant.'
'I don't want to hear about him,' Sophie said.
'He is fifty-four feet high,' the BFG said softly as he jogged along. 'And he is swolloping human beans like they is sugar-lumps, two or three at

a time.'
'You're making me nervous,' Sophie said.
'I is nervous myself,' the BFG whispered. 'I always gets as jumpsy as a joghopper when the Fleshlumpeating Giant is around.'
'Keep away from him,' Sophie pleaded.
'Not possible,' the BFG answered. 'He is galloping easily two times as quicksy as me.'
'Shall we turn back?' Sophie said.
'Turning back is worse,' the BFG said. 'If they is seeing me running away, they is all giving chase and throwing rocks.'
'They would never eat you though would they?' Sophie asked.
'Giants is never guzzling other giants,' the BFG said. 'They is fighting and squarreling a lot with each other, but never guzzling. Human beans is more tasty to them.'
The giants had already spotted the BFG and all heads were turned, watching him as he jogged forward. He was aiming to pass well to the right of the group.
Through her little peep-hole, Sophie saw the Fleshlumpeating Giant moving over to intercept them. He didn't hurry. He just loped over casually to a point where the BFG would have to pass. The others loped after him. Sophie counted nine of them altogether and she recognized the Bloodbottler in the middle of them. They were bored. They had nothing to do until nightfall. There was an air of menace about them as they loped slowly across the plain with long lolloping strides, heading for the BFG.
'Here comes the runty one!' boomed the Fleshlumpeater. 'Ho-ho there, runty one! Where is you splatchwinkling away to in such a hefty hurry?' He shot out an enormous arm and grabbed the BFG by the hair. The BFG didn't struggle. He simply stopped and stood quite still and said, 'Be so kind as to be letting go of my hair, Fleshlumpeater.'
The Fleshlumpeater released him and stepped back a pace. The other giants stood around, waiting for the fun to start.
'Now then, you little grobsquiffler!' boomed the Fleshlumpeater. 'We is all of us wanting to know where you is galloping off to every day in the daytime. Nobody ought to be galloping off to anywhere until it is getting dark. The human beans could easily be spotting you and starting a giant hunt and we is not wanting that to happen, is we not?'
'We is not!' shouted the other giants. 'Go back to your cave, runty one!'
'I is not galloping to any human bean country,' the BFG said. 'I is going to other places.'
'I is thinking,' said the Fleshlumpeater, 'that you is catching human beans and keeping them as pets!'
'Right you is!' cried the Bioodbottler. 'Just now I is hearing him

chittering away to one of them in his cave!'
'You is welcome to go and search my cave from frack to bunt,' the BFG answered. 'You can go looking into every crook and nanny. There is no human beans or stringy beans or runner beans or jelly beans or any other beans in there.'
Sophie crouched still as a mouse inside the BFG's pocket. She hardly dared breathe. She was terrified she might sneeze. The slightest sound or movement would give her away. Through the tiny peep-hole she watched the giants clustering around the poor BFG. How revolting they were! All of them had piggy little eyes and enormous mouths with thick sausage lips. When the Fleshlumpeater was speaking, she got a glimpse of his tongue. It was jet black, like a slab of black steak. Every one of them was more than twice as tall as the BFG.
Suddenly, the Fleshlumpeater shot out two enormous hands and grabbled the BFG around the waist. He tossed him high in the air and shouted, 'Catch him, Manhugger!'
The Manhugger caught him. The other giants spread out quickly in a large circle, each giant about twenty yards from his neighbour, preparing for the game they were going to play. Now the Manhugger threw the BFG high and far, shouting 'Catch him, Bonecruncher!'
The Bonecruncher ran forward and caught the tumbling BFG and immediately swung him up again. 'Catch him, Childchewer!' he shouted.
And so it went on. The giants were playing ball with the BFG, vying with each other to see who could throw him the highest. Sophie dug her nails into the sides of the pocket, trying to prevent herself from tumbling out when she was upside down. She felt as though she were in a barrel going over the Niagara Falls. And all the time there was the fearful danger that one of the giants would fail to catch the BFG and he would go crashing to the ground.
'Catch him, Meatdripper!' …
'Catch him, Gizzardgulper!' …
'Catch him, Maidmasher!' …
'Catch him, Bioodbottler!' …
'Catch him! … Catch him! … Catch him! …'
In the end, they got bored with this game. They dumped the poor BFG on the ground. He was dazed and shattered. They gave him a few kicks and shouted, 'Run, you little runt! Let us be seeing how fast you is galloping!' The BFG ran. What else could he do? The giants picked up rocks and hurled them after him. He managed to dodge them. 'Ruddy little runt!' they shouted. 'Troggy little twit! Shrivelly little shrimp! Mucky little midget! Squaggy little squib! Grobby little grub!'
At last the BFG got clear of them all and in another couple of minutes the pack of giants was out of sight over the horizon. Sophie popped

her head up from the pocket. ‘I didn’t like that,’ she said.
‘Phew!’ said the BFG. ‘Phew and far between! They was in a nasty crotching mood today, was they not! I is sorry you was having such a whirlgig time.’
‘No worse than you,’ Sophie said. ‘Would they ever really hurt you?’
‘I isn’t ever trusting them,’ the BFG said.
‘How do they actually catch the humans they eat?’ Sophie asked.
‘They is usually just sticking an arm in through the bedroom window and snitching them from their beds,’ the BFG said.
‘Like you did to me.’
‘Ah, but I isn’t eating you,’ the BFG said.
‘How else do they catch them?’ Sophie asked.
‘Sometimes,’ the BFG said, ‘they is swimmeling in from the sea like fishies with only their heads showing above the water, and then out comes a big hairy hand and grabbles someone off the beach.’
‘Children as well?’
‘Often chiddlers,’ the BFG said. ‘Little chiddlers who is building sandcastles on the beach. That is who the swimmeling ones are after. Little chiddlers is not so tough to eat as old grandmamma, so says the Childchewing Giant.’
As they talked, the BFG was galloping fast over the land. Sophie was standing right up in his waistcoat pocket now and holding on to the edge with both hands. Her head and shoulders were in the open and the wind was blowing in her hair.
‘How else do they catch people?’ she asked.
‘All of them is having their own special ways of catching the human bean,’ the BFG said. ‘The Meatdripping Giant is preferring to pretend he is a big tree growing in the park. He is standing in the park in the dusky evening and he is holding great big branches over his head, and there he is waiting until some happy families is coming to have a picnic under the spreading tree. The Meatdripping Giant is watching them as they lay out their little picnic. But in the end it is the Meatdripper who is having the picnic.’
‘It’s too awful!’ Sophie cried.
‘The Gizzardgulping Giant is a city lover,’ the BFG went on. ‘The Gizzardgulper is lying high up between the roofs of houses in the big cities. He is lying there snuggy as a sniggler and watching the human beans walking on the street below, and when he sees one that looks like it has a whoppsy-good flavour, he grabs it. He is simply reaching down and snitching it off the street like a monkey taking a nut. He says it is nice to be able to pick and choose what you is having for your supper. He says it is like choosing from a menu.’
‘Don’t people see him doing it?’ Sophie asked.
‘Never is they seeing him. Do not forget it is dusky-dark at this time.

Also, the Gizzardgulper has a very fast arm. His arm is going up and down quicker than squinkers.'
'But if all these people are disappearing every night, surely there's some sort of an outcry?' Sophie said.
'The world is a whopping big place,' the BFG said. 'It has a hundred different countries. The giants is clever. They is careful not to be skididdling off to the same country too often. They is always switchfiddling around.'
'Even so …' Sophie said.
'Do not forget,' the BFG said, 'that human beans is disappearing everywhere all the time even without the giants is guzzling them up. Human beans is killing each other much quicker than the giants is doing it.'
'But they don't eat each other,' Sophie said.
'Giants isn't eating each other either,' the BFG said. 'Nor is giants killing each other. Giants is not very lovely, but they is not killing each other. Nor is crockadowndillies killing other crockadowndillies. Nor is pussy-cats killing pussy-cats.'
'They kill mice,' Sophie said.
'Ah, but they is not killing their own kind,' the BFG said. 'Human beans is the only animals that is killing their own kind.'
'Don't poisonous snakes kill each other?' Sophie asked. She was searching desperately for another creature that behaved as badly as the human.
'Even poisnowse snakes is never killing each other,' the BFG said. 'Nor is the most fearsome creatures like tigers and rhinostossterisses. None of them is ever killing their own kind. Has you ever thought about that?'
Sophie kept silent.
'I is not understanding human beans at all,' the BFG said. 'You is a human bean and you is saying it is grizzling and horrigust for giants to be eating human beans. Right or left?'
'Right,' Sophie said.
'But human beans is squishing each other all the time,' the BFG said. 'They is shootling guns and going up in aerioplanes to drop their bombs on each other's heads every week. Human beans is always killing other human beans.'
He was right. Of course he was right and Sophie knew it. She was beginning to wonder whether humans were actually any better than giants. 'Even so,' she said, defending her own race, 'I think it's rotten that those foul giants should go off every night to eat humans. Humans have never done them any harm.'
'That is what the little piggy-wig is saying every day,' the BFG answered. 'He is saying, "I has never done any harm to the human

bean so why should he be eating me?"'

'Oh dear,' Sophie said.

'The human beans is making rules to suit themselves,' the BFG went on. 'But the rules they is making do not suit the little piggy-wiggies. Am I right or left?'

'Right,' Sophie said.

'Giants is also making rules. Their rules is not suiting the human beans. Everybody is making his own rules to suit himself.'

'But you don't like it that those beastly giants are eating humans every night, do you?' Sophie asked.

'I do not,' the BFG answered firmly. 'One right is not making two lefts. Is you quite cosy down there in my pocket?'

'I'm fine,' Sophie said.

Then suddenly, once again, the BFG went into that magical top gear of his. He began hurtling forward with phenomenal leaps. His speed was unbelievable. The landscape became blurred and again Sophie had to duck down out of the whistling gale to save her head from being blown off her shoulders. She crouched in the pocket and listened to the wind screaming past. It came knifing in through the tiny peep-hole in the pocket and whooshed around her like a hurricane.

But this time the BFG didn't stay in top gear long. It seemed as though he had had some barrier to cross, a vast mountain perhaps or an ocean or a great desert, but having crossed it, he once again slowed down to his normal gallop and Sophie was able to pop her head up and look out once more at the view.

She noticed immediately that they were now in an altogether paler country. The sun had disappeared above a film of vapour. The air was becoming cooler every minute. The land was flat and treeless and there seemed to be no colour in it at all.

Every minute, the mist became thicker. The air became colder still and everything became paler and paler until soon there was nothing but grey and white all around them.

They were in a country of swirling mists and ghostly vapours. There was some sort of grass underfoot but it was not green. It was ashy grey. There was no sign of a living creature and no sound at all except for the soft thud of the BFG's footsteps as he hurtled on through the fog.

Suddenly he stopped. 'We is here at last!' he announced. He bent down and lifted Sophie from his pocket and put her on the ground. She was still in her nightie and her feet were bare. She shivered and stared around her at the swirling mists and ghostly vapours.

'Where are we?' she asked.

'We is in Dream Country,' the BFG said. 'This is where all dreams is beginning.'

11. ’n Besoek aan Droomland

Ná die lawwe bobbelbrou-partytjie, sit Sophie weer bo-op die tafel.
“Voel jy nou goeter?” vra die Groot Sagmoedige
Reus.
“Baie beter, dankie,” sê Sophie.
“As ek bietjie oessiek voel,” merk die GSR op, “maak paar gorrelsvol bobbelbrou my blikoomblik doodlewendig.”
“Ek moet erken dat dit ’n besondere ondervinding was,” lag Sophie.
“Dit verwonderend!” sê die GSR. “Dit glorievol!” Hy draai om, gee een lang tree oor die grot en tel sy droomvangnet op. “Ek weggalop,” kondig hy aan. “Ek soek soeterig drome vir flesse. Ek doen dit elke dag sonder misloop. Kom jy saam?”
“Nee dankie,” sê Sophie, “nie met al daardie reuse wat op die loer lê nie!”
“Ek sit jou snoetsig in sak van onderbaadjie,” bied die GSR aan. “Dan sien niemand jou.”
Voordat Sophie kan beswaar maak, tel hy haar van die tafel af op en stop haar in sy onderbaadjiesak. Daar is oorgenoeg plek vir haar en eintlik is dit baie gemaklik.
“Wil jy gaatjie hê vir oogkyker?” vra hy.
“Daar is een,” sê Sophie. Sy het reeds ’n klein gaatjie in die sak ontdek, en as sy haar een oog teen die gaatjie hou, kan sy baie goed sien.
Die GSR buk en sit ’n klomp leë flesse in die groot tas. Hy maak die tas toe en tel dit met die een hand op, terwyl hy die net in die ander hand vasgryp.
Toe hy buite kom, begin hy aanstryk oor die warm
grel woestyn waar die blou rotsblokke, omring van dooie bome, een-een staan. Die ander reuse sluip daar rund.
Sophie sit gehurk in die onderbaadjiesak, met haar
nog teen die loergat. Sy sien ’n groep reuse so driehon-tlcrd meter voor hulle staan.
“Hou jou asems!” fluister die GSR. “Kruis jou vin-gerling! Hier gaat ons reg verby ander reuse. Sien jy inroot viesfoeilike een reg voor ons?”
“Ek sien hom,” sê Sophie en haar tande klap opmekaar.
“Hy naaraakligste van almal. Sy naam Hompvleisvreter.”
“Ek wil niks van hom weet nie!” fluister Sophie en ilruk haar ore toe.
Die GSR maak asof hy haar nie hoor nie en gaan voort: “Hy hoër as sestien meter,” sê hy saggies terwyl hy voortdraf. “Hy gopsel mensdommes soos suiker-ldonte, drie, twee gelyk.”
“Jy maak my bang!” bibber Sophie.
“Ek bang myself,” fluister die GSR. “Ek horriepie-perig as Hompvleisvreter naby kom.”

“Bly tog net weg van hom!” smeek Sophie.
“Nie moontlik,” sê die GSR. “Hy galop twee keer vinniger.”
“Moet ons dan nie maar teruggaan nie?” vra Sophie
beangs.
“Teruggaan nie goeter. As hulle sien ek weggalop, jaag hul met rotse!”
“Maar hulle sal jou nooit éét nie, sal hulle?” vra
Sophie benoud.
“Reuse nooit ander reuse eet,” verseker hy haar. “Hulle veg en bakfoeter, maar nooit mekaar vreet. Mensdommes smeklekkerder.”
Die reuse het al klaar die GSR opgemerk. A1 die koppe draai in sy rigting en hulle hou hom dop soos hy nader kom. Hy mik om regs by hulle verby te gaan.
Deur haar loergat sien Sophie hoedat die Hompvleisvreter vorentoe tree om hulle voor te keer. Hy haas hom nie - loop net terloops na die plek waar die GSR by hom moet verbygaan. Sophie tel altesaam nege reuse, en sy herken die Bloedslurper wat in die middel van die groep staan. Die reuse is verveeld. Hulle kan niks doen voor dit donker word nie. Op onheilspellende wyse be-weeg hulle stadig maar met lang tree oor die vlakte in die GSR se rigting.
“Hier kom uitwerpsel!” skree die Hompvleisvreter. “Ho-ho, klein asaartappel, waar gaan jy so vinnig?” Hy skiet sy enorme hand uit en gryp die GSR aan die hare.
Die GSR stribbel nie teë nie. Hy staan doodstil en sê bedaard: “Los my, Hompvleisvreter!”
Die Hompvleisvreter los hom en staan terug. Die ander reuse maak ’n kring om hulle en wag vir die pret
om te begin.
“Wat nou, klein groeseling,” bulder die Hompvleis vreter, “ons almal wil weet waar jy in dag weggalop. Niemand anders galop in dag weg. Hulle wag vir don ker. In dag kan mensdommes goed sien en dan kom daar reuse-jag en ons wil dit nie hê. Regs of links?” vra hy vir die ander reuse.
“Regs!” skree hulle. “Gaan terug!”
“Ek galop nie na land van mensdommes. Ek galop na ander plek.”
“Ek dink,” sê die Hompvleisvreter stadig, “jy mens
dommes gaps vir troeteltiere!”
“Jy bietjie reg!” kom dit van die Bloedslurper. “Anner-tyd hy brabbel met een in grot.”
“Julie kan my grot agterstevoor kyk,” bied die GSR
nan. “Julie kan kyk in elke hoek en haai. Daar nie tnensdommes of wensdommes of pensdommes of enige under dommes in grot.”
Sophie sit inmekaargekrimp van vrees. Sy is amper te
hang om asem te haal. Sê nou maar sy nies! Sy weet die j.’,e rings te geluidjie sal haar skuilplek verraai. Deur die loergaatjie sien sy dat die

reuse die kring om hulle al klciner trek. Hoe walglik is hulle nie! Hulle het almal klein varkogies en yslike monde en dik, dik worslippe. Terwyl die Hompvleisvreter praat, sien sy sy tong. Dis pikswart en lyk soos ’n groot stuk vrot beesvleis. Selfs die kleinste van die ander reuse is meer as twee keer groter as die GSR.
Die Hompvleisvreter steek meteens sy twee enorme
hande uit en gryp die GSR om sy middel. Hy gooi hom lioog in die lug op en skree: “Vang hom, Manneklemmer!”
Die Manneklemmer vang hom. Nou vorm die reuse
’n groot kring. Hulle staan so twintig meter van mekaar af. Die speletjie is aan die gang! Die Manneklemmer gooi die GSR hoog in die lug terwyl hy op sy beurt skree: “Vang hom, Beenknerser!”
Die Beenknerser hardloop vorentoe en vang die tui-melende GSR terwyl hy op sy beurt skree: “Vang hom, Kindkouer!”
En so gaan hulle aan. Die reuse speel heerlik bal met
die GSR en wedywer oor wie hom die hoogste kan gooi. Sophie klou op lewe en dood aan die rand van die onderbaadjiesak vas om te keer dat sy nie uitval nie. ’n Vaatjie wat oor die Victoria-waterval rol, moet seker so voel! En gedurigdeur is sy doodbang dat een van hulle sal misvang en dat die GSR dan op die grond sal neerplof.
“Vang hom, Sousdrupper!” “Vang hom, Afvalvreter!” “Vang hom, Vroueklouer!” “Vang hom, Bloedslurper!”
Uiteindelik word hulle moeg vir die speletjie. Hulle gooi die GSR op die grond neer. Hy is duiselig en verdwaas.
Hulle gee hom ’n paar harde skoppe en skree: “Weg is jy, jou bog! Vinnige spore voor ons jou opdons! Treurige niksneut! Beskimmelde krewel! Smerige klein slymvreter! Papperige, stinkende tjokka! Griewelende wurm!”
Einde ten laaste laat hulle horn met rus cn hy maak hom haastig uit die voete. Gou is die nare reuse buite sig.
Sophie steek haar kop uit. “Ek het niks dáárvan gehou
nie!” sê sy.
“Gommelastiek en bollemakieste!” sê die GSR. “Hulle vandag omge-ellie. Ek bejammer dat jy so rondomsalie-tyd het!”
“Dit was vir jou baie erger,” troos Sophie. “Wou hulle jou regtig seergemaak het?”
“Ek vertrou hulle nooit as te emmer,” sê die GSR. “Hoe vang hulle nou eintlik die mense wat hulle
eet?” wil Sophie weet.
“Hulle steek net arm deur venster en jy weg,” sê die GSR.
“Nes jy met my gemaak het,” merk Sophie op. “Ja, maar verhou - ek jou nie opgcgopsel!” “Vang hulle mense op ander maniere ook?”
“Een tyd swem hulle in see,” sê die GSR. “Hulle swem soos viste met kop bo water en harige hand kom uit en grypel een van strand af.”

“Kinders ook?”
“Baie kidderen,” sê die GSR. “Klein kidderen wat sandpasteie maak - dit húlle wat reus soek. Klein kid deren nie so taai soos oumas, so sê Kindkouer.”
Terwyl hy praat, galop hy met yslike tree oor die aar-de. Sophie staan nou regop in die onderbaadjiesak en klou met albei hande aan die rand vas. Haar kop en skouers is buite en die wind waai deur haar hare.
“Op watter ander maniere vang hulle mense?” vra die nuuskierige Sophie.
“Elkeen eie manier,” sê hy. “Sousdrupper speel hy
groot boom. In aand staan hy met groot takke bokant kop en wag vir gelukkige familie wat piekniek hou. Sousdrupper hou dop en kyk hoe hulle piekniek uitpak. Maar dit Sousdrupper wat piekniek hou.”
“Dis naar! Dis … dis ááklig! Dis afgrýslik!” roep
Sophie uit.
“Afvalvreter liefie weer groot stede. Afvalvreter lê bo op dakke van huise. Lê daar snoetsig soos snoesie en kyk mensdommes wat in straat loop. As hy sien een lyk beksmeklekker, gryp hy. Hy gryp van straat soos aap neut gryp. Hy sê so hy kan kies en kleur soos van spys-Vraat.”
“Sien die mense in die straat hom dan nie?” vra
Sophie.
“Niemand sien. Onthou dis donker darie tyd en Afval-vrcter baie vinnige arm. Arm gaan op en af vinniger as knippers.”
“Maar as daar elke aand soveel mense verdwyn, moet
jnnand tog ’n bohaai daaroor maak?”
“Die wêreld tameletjie groot plek,” sê die GSR.
“Daar honderde verskeidende lande. Reuse slim. Gryp nie elke aand van selfde plek. Hulle skuiwe van een plek na ander.”
“Maar tog …” sê Sophie.
“En moenie vergeet,” voeg die GSR by, “mensdommes verdwyn sónder dat reuse hulle gopsel. Mensdommes maak mensdommes vinniger dood as reuse!”
“Maar hulle éét nie mekaar op nie!” sê Sophie.
“Reuse gopsel ook nie reuse,” sê die GSR, “en reuse dood nie reuse. Kotterokke dood nie kotterokke. Katte dood nie katte.”
“Maar katte maak muise dood!” skerm Sophie.
“Ja, maar nie hulleself. Mensdommes enigste wat homself dood.”
“Maak giftige slange nie mekaar dood nie? En wat
van spinnekoppe?” vra Sophie. Sy soek naarstiglik na ’n ander dier wat hom net so sleg gedra soos mense!
“Giftige slange byt nie mekaar,” sê die GSR. “Ook
nie vreesvolle dierklasies soos tiere en harnosters. Hulle maak nie eie

dood. Het jy al gedink?"
"Maar spinnekoppe eet mekaar," sê Sophie weer.
"Weet nie van spinnebekke," sê die GSR. Sophie bly stil.
"Ek bestaan nie mensdommes," sê die GSR. "Jy
mensdomme en jy sê dit viesaaklig en skrikkerig dat reuse mensdommes vreet. Regs of links?"
"Reg," sê Sophie.
"Mensdommes dood mensdommes heeltyd. Hulle skiet met skietding en vlieg vlugtye en gooi bomme op koppe van ander mensdommes."
Hy is reg. Natuurlik is hy reg, en Sophie besef dit. Sy begin wonder of mense enigsins beter as die mensvretende reuse is. "Maar tog," probeer sy haar ras ver-dedig, "dink ek nog dis aaklig om elke nag mense te eet. Die mense het húlle tog nie kwaad aangedoen nie!"
"Dit wat varkspeentjie ook sê," kap die GSR teë. "Hy sê: 'Ek die mens nie kwaad gedoen, waarom vreet hy mý?'"
"Goeiste!" sê Sophie, haar voete skoon onder haar uitgeslaan.
"Mensdommes maak eie reel wat hulle pas," vervolg die GSR, "maar varkspeentjies dink dit viesaaklige reel. Regs of links?"
"Reg," gee Sophie toe.
"Reuse ook reëls. Mensdommes hou nie van reuse se reëls."
"Maar jy het dan self gesê jy dink dis naar dat reuse mense eet!"
"Ek hou nie daarvan," erken die GSR, "maar twee regters maak nie 'n linker. Is jy nog snoetsig in baadjiesak?"
"Baie gemaklik, dankie," sê Sophie, wat maar te bly is om oor iets anders te kan praat.
Skielik is dit asof die GSR weer in sy hoogste versnelling gaan. Hy beweeg vorentoe met ongelooflike spronge. Die spoed is merkwaardig. Die landskap word in vaal streep, en Sophie duik weer heeltemal in die onderbaadjiesak in, want die wind ruk en pluk geweldig anii haar kop. Sy kruip diep, diep in die sak weg en hiister hoe die wind om hulle woed. Dit sny selfs deur die loergaatjie en loei om haar ore soos 'n orkaan.
Die geweldige spoed neem egter gou af. Nou voel dit iisof hulle ligweg oor die aardc skuif. Die GSR draf nou siadig genoeg dat Sophie weer haar kop kan uitsteek.
Sy merk dadelik op dat hulle in 'n mistige landstreek
ih . Die son is agter die wasigheid versteek. Die lug is nanmerklik koeler. Die landskap is plat en boomloos. Om die waarheid te sê, alles lyk vaal en kleurloos.
Elke oomblik word die newels digter. Dit word kouer en kouer en alles word dowwer en dowwer totdat net 'n grys-wit wolk sigbaar is. Dis 'n wêreld van dwarrelende
inis en spookagtige wasem. Die grond is bedek met die een of ander gras, maar die gras is nie groen nie, dis kleurloos. Daar is geen teken

van ’n lewende wese nie. Behalwe die sagte ploef-plaf van die GSR se voete soos hy voortsnel, is daar nie ’n geluid van enige aard in die inis nie.

Skielik stop hy. “Ons eindelik-uit hier!” kondig hy aan. Hy haal Sophie uit sy sak en sit haar op die grond
neer. Sy het nog haar nagjurk aan en is kaalvoet. Sy kyk bibberend om haar rond na die dwarrelende mis en spookagtige wasem.

“Waar is ons nou?” vra sy.

“In Droomland,” antwoord die GSR. “Dit waar al die drome begin.”

12. DREAM-CATCHING

The Big Friendly Giant put the suitcase on the ground. He bent down low so that his enormous face was close to Sophie's. 'From now on, we is keeping as still as winky little micies,' he whispered.

Sophie nodded. The misty vapour swirled around her. It made her cheeks damp and left dewdrops in her hair.

The BFG opened the suitcase and took out several empty glass jars. He set them ready on the ground, with their screw tops removed. Then he stood up very straight. His head was now high up in the swirling mist and it kept disappearing, then appearing again. He was holding the long net in his right hand.

Sophie, staring upwards, saw through the mist that his colossal ears were beginning to swivel out from his head. They began waving gently to and fro.

Suddenly the BFG pounced. He leaped high in the air and swung the net through the mist with a great swishing sweep of his arm. 'Got him!' he cried. 'A jar! A jar! Quick quick quick!' Sophie picked up a jar and held it up to him. He grabbed hold of it. He lowered the net. Very carefully he tipped something absolutely invisible from the net into the jar. He dropped the net and swiftly clapped one hand over the jar. 'The top!' he whispered. 'The jar top quick!' Sophie picked up the screw top and handed it to him. He screwed it on tight and the jar was closed. The BFG was very excited. He held the jar close to one ear and listened intently.

'It's a winksquiffler!' he whispered with a thrill in his voice. 'It's … it's … it's … it's even better. It's a phizzwizard! It's a golden phizzwizard!'

Sophie stared at him.

'Oh my, oh my!' he said, holding the jar in front of him. 'This will be giving some little tottler a very happy night when I is blowing it in!'

'Is it really a good one?' Sophie asked.

'A good one?' he cried. 'It's a golden phizzwizard! It is not often I is getting one of these!' He handed the jar to Sophie and said, 'Please be still as a starfish now. I is thinking there may be a whole swarm of phizzwizards up here today. And do kindly stop breathing. You is terribly noisy down there.'

'I haven't moved a muscle,' Sophie said.

'Then don't,' the BFG answered sharply. Once again he stood up tall in the mist, holding his net at the ready. Then came the long silence, the waiting, the listening, and at last, with surprising suddenness came the leap and the swish of the net.

'Another jar!' he cried. 'Quick quick quick!'

When the second dream was safely in the jar and the top was screwed down, the BFG held it to his ear.
'Oh no!' he cried. 'Oh mince my maggots! Oh swipe my swoggles!'
'What's the matter?' Sophie asked.
'It's a trogglehumper!' he shouted. His voice was filled with fury and anguish. 'Oh, save our solos!' he cried. 'Deliver us from weasels! The devil is dancing on my dibbler!'
'What are you talking about?' Sophie said. The BFG was getting more distressed every moment.
'Oh, bash my eyebones!' he cried, waving the jar in the air. 'I come all this way to get lovely golden dreams and what is I catching?'
'What are you catching?' Sophie said.
'I is catching a frightsome trogglehumper!' he cried. 'This is a bad bad dream! It is worse than a bad dream! It is a nightmare!'
'Oh dear,' Sophie said. 'What will you do with that?'
'I is never never letting it go!' the BFG cried. 'If I do, then some poor little tottler will be having the most curdbloodling time! This one is a real kicksy bogthumper! I is exploding it as soon as I get home!'
'Nightmares are horrible,' Sophie said. 'I had one once and I woke up sweating all over.'
'With this one you would be waking up screaming all over!' the BFG said. 'This one would make your teeth stand on end! If this one got into you, your blood would be freezing to icicles and your skin would go creeping across the floor!'
'Is it as bad as that?'
'It's worse!' cried the BFG. 'This is a real whoppsy grobswitcher!'
'You said it was a trogglehumper,' Sophie told him.
'It is a trogglehumper!' cried the exasperated BFG. 'But it is also a bogthumper and a grobswitcher! It is all three riddled into one! Oh, I is so glad I is clutching it tight. Ah, you wicked beastie, you!' he cried, holding up the jar and staring into it. 'Never more is you going to be bunkdoodling the poor little human-beaney tottlers!'
Sophie, who was also staring into the glass jar, cried out, 'I can see it! There's something in there!'
'Of course there is something in there,' the BFG said. 'You is looking at a frightsome trogglehumper.'
'But you told me dreams were invisible.'
'They is always invisible until they is captured,' the BFG told her. 'After that they is losing a little of their invisibility. We is seeing this one very clearly.'
Inside the jar Sophie could see the faint scarlet outline of something that looked like a mixture between a blob of gas and a bubble of jelly. It was moving violently, thrashing against the sides of the jar and forever changing shape.

‘It’s wiggling all over the place!’ Sophie cried. ‘It’s fighting to get out! It’ll bash itself to bits!’
‘The nastier the dream, the angrier it is getting when it is in prison,’ the BFG said. ‘It is the same as with wild animals. If an animal is very fierce and you is putting it in a cage, it will make a tremendous rumpledumpus. If it is a nice animal like a cockatootloo or a fogglefrump, it will sit quietly. Dreams is exactly the same. This one is a nasty fierce bogrotting nightmare. Just look at him splashing himself against the glass!’
‘It’s quite frightening!’ Sophie cried.
‘I would be hating to get this one inside me on a darksome night,’ the BFG said.
‘So would I!’ Sophie said.
The BFG started putting the bottles back into the suitcase.
‘Is that all?’ Sophie asked. ‘Are we going?’
‘I is so upset by this trogglehumping bogthumping grobswitcher,’ the BFG said, ‘that I is not wishing to go on. Dream-catching is finished for today.’
Soon Sophie was back in the waistcoat pocket and the BFG was racing home as fast as he could go. When, at last, they emerged out of the mist and came again on to the hot yellow wasteland, all the other giants were sprawled out on the ground, fast asleep.

12. Die droomvangs

Die Groot Sagmoedige Reus sit die koffer neer. Hy buk laag en met sy tamaai gesig teen Sophie se oor fluister hy: “Bly nou so stil soos muisiekiekies.”
Sophie knik. Die mistige dampe krul oral om haar. Haar wange word klam en waterdruppeltjies vorm in haar hare.
Die GSR maak die koffer oop en haal ’n paar leë flesse daaruit. Hy skroef die deksels af en sit hulle versigtig op die grond neer. Dan staan hy penorent. Hy is so lank dat sy kop bo in die mistigheid verdwyn en weer verskyn. Hy hou die lang stok met die net vooraan in sy regterhand vas.
Toe Sophie opkyk, sien sy deur die dynserigheid hoe die GSR se kolossale ore nóú vorentoe en dán agtertoe flap. Hulle wieg stadig heen en weer.
Skielik spring hy. Hy spring hoog in die lug op en
swaai die net met ’n sirkelbeweging rond. “Het hom!” skree hy opgewonde. “’n Fles! Gou! Gou-gou!” Sophie tel ’n fles op en gee dit vir hom aan. Hy gryp daarna. Hy bring die net nader, en baie versigtig stort hy iets onsigbaars in die fles. Hy laat die net val en sit sy groot hand bo-oor die fles. “Nou die deksel! Gou!” Sophie gee die deksel aan. Die GSR skroef die deksel styf vas. Hy is oorstelp van vreugde. Hy hou die fles digby sy oor en luister aandagtig.
“Dit ’n knipkopper!” en sy asem jaag van opgewon-denheid. “Dit … dit … dit selfs goeter! Dit ’n vertó- wering! ’n Goue vertowering!”
Sophie staar horn aan.
“O, lief, liewer, liefste!” sê hy terwyl hy die fles aanskou. “Kleine kidderen slaap salig as ek dit by kamer inblaas!”
“Is dit ’n goeie droom?” vra Sophie.
“’n Goeie droom? Dit ’n goue vertowering! Ek kry nie baie goue vertowerings!” Hy oorhandig die fles aan Sophie en sê: “Bêre dit veilig en bly asseblief so stil soos stervis. Daar baie drome vandag in rondte. En moenie asemhaal. Jy baie rumoererig daar onder!”
“Ek het skaars ’n spier verroer,” sê Sophie vererg. “Moet dan nie,” sê die GSR skerp. Hy ’staan weer
orent met sy kop tussen die wolke en hou die net reg. Daar volg ’n lang stilte, ’n lang gewag, ’n fyn geluister, en dan sien Sophie weer die skielike sprong en hoor sy die sjiep-sjoep van die net soos dit deur die lug trek.
“’n Fles!” fluister hy dringend. “Gou-gou!” Toe die tweede droom veilig in die fles is, met die deksel sorg-vuldig vasgeskroef, hou die GSR dit teen sy oor.

“Agge nee!” kreun hy saggies. “O, muise en luise! O, ag, slaat my gorrels!”
“Wat makeer?” vra Sophie ontsteld.
“Dit troggelstamper!” skree hy woedend. “Ag, red ons van wesels! Verlos ons van wolwe! Die duiwel dans op my dobbeleer!”
“Waarvan prááť jy?” vra Sophie. “Ek verstaan g’n niks nie!”
Die GSR raak al hoe meer ontsteld.
“Ag, stamp my wenkbroue!” skree hy en swaai die fles in die lug rond. “Ek kom heelpad hierheen vir wonderbedaarlike goue drome en kyk net wat ek vang!”
“Wat het jy gevang?” vra Sophie.
“Ek vang troggelstamper,” sê hy. “Troggelstamper slegte, slégte droom. Troggelstamper is nagherrie.”
“Ai tog!” sê Sophie. “Wat gaan jy daarmee maak?” “Ek sal dit nooit loslaat,” sê die GSR beslis. “As ek
.lit doen, het klein sleuter bloedskommelende tydjie.
Hit regtig skop-in-die-maag troggelstamper. Ek hom ontplof by huis.”
“Nagmerries is aaklige goed,” sê Sophie. “Ek het
cenkeer een gehad en ek kan onthou dat ek papnat ge-sweet wakker geword het.”
“Met hierdie een word jy met skree wakker. Jou tan-de staan regop. Jou bloed vries tot ys en jou vel kruip
oor vloer.”
“Is dit só erg?”
“Erger,” sê die GSR. “Dit ’n regte grobbeldraaier.” “Jy het nou net gesê dis ’n troggelstamper,” herinner Sophie hom.
“Dit ’n troggelstamper,” sê die GSR vererg, “én ’n
grobbeldraaier én ’n krimpbanger. Dit al drie ondermekaar. O, jou slegte besie, jy!” sê hy terwyl hy die fles vashou en daarna kyk. “Nooit gaan jy kuierslaap by klein kidderen!”
Sophie, wat met groot aandag die fles bekyk, roep
opgewonde uit: “Ek kan dit sien! Daar’s iets binne-in die fles!”
“Natuurlik daar iets binne-in,” sê die GSR. “Jy sien
vreesbange troggelstamper!”
“Maar jy’t dan gesê drome is onsigbaar!”
“Hulle onsigbaar,” verseker hy haar. “Maar as ek hulle vang, verloor hulle bietjie onsigbaarheid. Hierdie een jy kan sien.”
Binne-in die fles is die buitelyne van iets sigbaar -
iets wat lyk na ’n mengsel van ’n bol gras en ’n druppel jellie. Dit woel rond en stamp teen die kante van die fles en verander telkens van vorm.
“Dit krul en draai vir ’n naarheid,” sê Sophie. “Dit lyk my die ou nagmerrie stry en stoei om los te kom. Hy gaan homself nog stukkend stamp!”

“Viesaaklige troggelstamper altyd kwaaierig wanneer
vas,” verduidelik die GSR. “Dit dieselfde met dierklasies. As jy wilde dierklasie in hok sit, kry jy geweld van boefferbaffer. As mooi dierklasies, soos kotterok of par-rapont, dan sit dit stil. Drome net so. Dié een viesaak lige, woederige grobbeldraaier. Kyk hoe woesterny hy teen fles!”

“Ek raak skoon bang as ek daarna kyk!” sê Sophie.

“Ek wil nie hierdie een in middel van donker nag hê,” sê die GSR.

“Ek ook nie,” stem Sophie saam.

Die GSR sit al die flesse weer in die koffer terug.

“Is jy klaar?” vra Sophie verbaas. “Gaan ons dan nou al terug?”

“Ek so omgekantel van grobbeldraaier-troggelstamper,” sê die GSR, “dat ek ophou. Droomvang klaar vir vandag!”

Sophie neem weer haar plek in die onderbaadjiesak in, en die GSR jaag huis toe so vinnig soos hy kan. Toe hulle oplaas uit die mistigheid kom en die warm geel woestyn onder hulle le, sien hulle dat al die reuse vas nan die slaap op die grond uitgestrek lê.

13. A TROGGLEHUMPER FOR THE FLESHLUMPEATER

'They is always having fifty winks before they goes scumpering off to hunt human beans in the evening,' the BFG said. He stopped for a few moments to let Sophie have a better look. 'Giants is only sleeping every then and now,' he said. 'Not nearly as much as human beans. Human beans is crazy for sleeping. Is it ever occurring to you that a human bean who is fifty is spending about twenty years sleeping fast?'
'I must admit that never occurred to me,' Sophie said.
'You should allow it to occur to you,' the BFG said. 'Imagine it please. This human bean who says he is fifty has been fast asleep for twenty years and is not even knowing where he is! Not even doing anything! Not even thinking!'
'It's a funny thought,' Sophie said.
'Exunckly,' the BFG said. 'So what I is trying to explain to you is that a human bean who says he is fifty is not fifty, he is only thirty.'
'What about me?' Sophie said. 'I am eight.'
'You is not eight at all,' the BFG said. 'Human bean babies and little chiddlers is spending half their time sleeping, so you is only four.'
'I'm eight,' Sophie said.
'You may think you is eight,' the BFG said, 'but you has only spent four years of your life with your little eyes open. You is only four and please stop higgling me. Titchy little snapperwhippers like you should not be higgling around with an old sage and onions who is hundreds of years more than you.'
'How much do giants sleep?' Sophie asked.
'They is never wasting much time snozzling,' the BFG said. 'Two or three hours is enough.'
'When do you sleep?' Sophie asked.
'Even less,' the BFG answered. 'I is sleeping only once in a blue baboon.'
Sophie, peeping out from her pocket, examined the nine sleeping giants. They looked even more grotesque now than when they were awake. Sprawled out across the yellow plain, they covered an area about the size of a football field. Most of them were lying on their backs with their enormous mouths wide open, and they were snoring like foghorns. The noise was awful.
Suddenly the BFG gave a jump in the air. 'By gumfrog!' he cried. 'I is just having the most whoppsy-whiffling idea!'
'What?' Sophie said.
'Wait!' he cried. 'Hold your horsefeathers! Keep your skirt on! Just you

wait to see what I is going to bring about!' He galloped off fast to his cave with Sophie hanging on tight to the rim of the pocket. He rolled back the stone. He entered the cave. He was very excited. He was moving quickly. 'You stay where you is in my pocket, huggybee,' he said. 'We is doing this lovely bit of buckswashling both together.' He laid aside the dream-catching net but hung on to the suitcase. He ran across to the other side of the cave and grabbed the long trumpet thing, the one he had been carrying when Sophie had first seen him in the village. With the suitcase in one hand and the trumpet in the other, he dashed out of the cave.

What is he up to now, Sophie wondered.

'Peep your head up good,' the BFG said, 'then you will get a fine winkle of what is going on.'

When the BFG came near to the sleeping giants, he slowed his pace. He began moving softly. He crept on his toes towards the ugly brutes. They were still snoring loudly. They looked repulsive, filthy, diabolical. The BFG tip-toed around them. He went past the Gizzardgulper, the Bloodbottler, the Meatdripper, the Childchewer. Then he stopped. He had reached the Fleshlumpeater. He pointed at him, then he looked down at Sophie and gave her a big wink.

He knelt on the ground and very quietly he opened the suitcase. He took out of it the glass jar containing the terrible nightmarish trogglehumper.

At that point, Sophie guessed what was going to happen next.

Owtch, she thought. This could be rather dangerous. She crouched lower in the pocket so that only the top of her head and her eyes were showing. She wanted to be ready to duck out of sight very fast should anything go wrong.

They were about ten feet away from the Fleshlumpeater's face. The snoring-snorting noise he was making was disgusting. Every now and again a big bubble of spit formed between his two open lips and then it would burst with a splash and cover his face with saliva.

Taking infinite care, the BFG unscrewed the top of the glass jar and tipped the squiggling squirming faintly scarlet trogglehumper into the wide end of his long trumpet. He put the other end of the trumpet to his lips. He aimed the instrument directly at the Fleshlumpeater's face. He took a deep breath, puffed out his cheeks and then whoof! He blew!

Sophie saw a flash of pale red go darting towards the giant's face. For a split second it hovered above the face. Then it was gone. It seemed to have been sucked up the giant's nose, but it had all happened so quickly, Sophie couldn't be sure.

'We had better be skiddling away quick to where it is safe,' the BFG whispered. He trotted off for about a hundred yards, then he stopped.

He crouched low to the earth. 'Now,' he said, 'we is waiting for the gun and flames to begin.'
They didn't have long to wait.
The air was suddenly pierced by the most fearful roar Sophie had ever heard, and she saw the Fleshlumpeater's body, all fifty-four feet of it, rise up off the ground and fall back again with a thump. Then it began to wriggle and twist and bounce about in the most violent fashion. It was quite frightening to watch.
'Eeeow!' roared the Fleshlumpeater. 'Ayeee! Oooow!'
'He's still asleep,' the BFG whispered. 'The terrible trogglehumping nightmare is beginning to hit him.'
'Serves him right,' Sophie said. She could feel no sympathy for this great brute who ate children as though they were sugar-lumps.
'Save us!' screamed the Fleshlumpeater, thrashing about madly. 'He is after me! He is getting me!'
The thrashing of limbs and the waving of arms became more violent by the second. It was an awesome thing to watch such a massive creature having such mighty convulsions.
'It's Jack!' bellowed the Fleshlumpeater. 'It's the grueful gruncious Jack! Jack is after me! Jack is wackcrackling me! Jack is spikesticking me! Jack is splashplunking me! It is the terrible frightswiping Jack!' The Fleshlumpeater was writhing about over the ground like some colossal tortured snake. 'Oh, spare me, Jack!' he yelled. 'Don't hurt me, Jack!'
'Who is this Jack he's on about?' Sophie whispered.
'Jack is the only human bean all giants is frightened of,' the BFG told her. 'They is all absolutely terrified of Jack. They is all hearing that Jack is a famous giant-killer.'
'Save me!' screamed the Fleshlumpeater. 'Have mercy on this poor little giant! The beanstalk! He is coming at me with his terrible spikesticking beanstalk! Take it away! I is begging you, Jack, I is praying you not to touch me with your terrible spikesticking beanstalk!'
'Us giants,' the BFG whispered, 'is not knowing very much about this dreaded human bean called Jack. We is knowing only that he is a famous giant-killer and that he is owning something called a beanstalk. We is knowing also that the beanstalk is a fearsome thing and Jack is using it to kill giants.'
Sophie couldn't stop smiling.
'What is you griggling at?' the BFG asked her, slightly nettled.
'I'll tell you later,' Sophie said.
The awful nightmare had now gripped the great brute to such an extent that he was tying his whole body into knots. 'Do not do it, Jack!' he screeched. 'I was not eating you, Jack! I is never eating

human beans! I swear I has never gobbled a single human bean in all my wholesome life!'
'Liar,' said the BFG.
Just then, one of the Fleshlumpeater's flailing fists caught the still-fast-asleep Meatdripping Giant smack in the mouth. At the same time, one of his furiously thrashing legs kicked the snoring Gizzardgulping Giant right in the guts. Both the injured giants woke up and leaped to their feet.
'He is swiping me right in the mouth!' yelled the Meatdripper.
'He is bungswoggling me smack in the guts!' shouted the Gizzardgulper.
The two of them rushed at the Fleshlumpeater and began pounding him with their fists and feet. The wretched Fleshlumpeater woke up with a bang. He awoke straight from one nightmare into another. He roared into battle, and in the bellowing thumping rough and tumble that followed, one sleeping giant after another either got stepped upon or kicked. Soon, all nine of them were on their feet having the most almighty free-for-all. They punched and kicked and scratched and bit and butted each other as hard as they could. Blood flowed. Noses went crunch. Teeth fell out like hailstones. The giants roared and screamed and cursed, and for many minutes the noise of battle rolled across the yellow plain.
The BFG smiled a big wide smile of absolute pleasure. 'I is loving it when they is all having a good tough and rumble,' he said.
'They'll kill each other,' Sophie said.
'Never,' the BFG answered. 'Those beasts is always bishing and walloping at one another. Soon it will be getting dusky and they will be galloping off to fill their tummies.'
'They're coarse and foul and filthy,' Sophie said. 'I hate them!'
As the BFG headed back to the cave, he said quietly, 'We certainly was putting that nightmare to good use though, wasn't we?'
'Excellent use,' Sophie said. 'Well done you.'

13. 'n Troggelstamper vir die Hompvleisvreter

"Hulle knip almal eers 'n kuiltjie voor hulle snags wegskarrel mensdommes te jag," verduidelik die Groot Sagmoedige Reus. Hy gaan staan sodat Sophie hulle kan sien. "Reuse slaap net toe en af," sê hy. "Nie so baie soos mensdommes. Het jy al ooit gedink mensdomme van vyftig jaar slaap omtrent twintig jaar om?"
"Nog nooit daaraan gedink nie!" sê Sophie.
"Jy moet daaraan dink," sê die GSR. "Dink mooi. Mensdomme van vyftig jaar slaap twintig jaar en dink nie eens daaraan. Doen nie iets, nie eens dink!"
"Nogal 'n snaakse gedagte," sê Sophie.

“So net,” glimlag die GSR, “maar wat ek perbeer sê, mensdomme wat dink hy vyftig, hy net dertig!”
“Maar wat dan van my?” vra Sophie. “Ek is agt!”
“Jy nooit agt!” spot die GSR. “Kidderen slaap helfte van tyd. Jy net vier!”
“Ek is agt,” stry Sophie.
“Jy dink jy agt,” sê die GSR, “maar jou oogkykers net vier jaar oop. Jy net vier. Moenie met my stridder. Snipperkous klein pitvissies soos jy moenie stridder met ou wysneus honderde jare ouder, soos ek.”
“Hoeveel slaap reuse dan?” vra Sophie.
“Hulle mors nie tyd met sluimering!” antwoord die
GSR. “Drie, twee uur genoeg.” “Hoeveel slaap jy?” vra Sophie.
“Baie minder. Ek slaap net een keer in prikkeljaar.” Sophie, vanwaar sy in die reus se sak sit, kan die an
der reuse duidelik sien. Hulle lyk nou selfs groter as toe hulle wakker was. Hulle lê uitgestrek op die geel plato wat so groot soos ’n rugby veld is. Die meeste van hulle Ic op hulle rue met hulle monde wawyd oop, en hulle snork soos mishorings. Die geraas is oorverdowend.
Skielik spring die GSR in die lug op. “Kroekel-krakkel!” sê hy opgewonde. “Ek kry slimste blinkerig-ste idee! Hou jou nagrok vas! Wag net piepelkort tyd.” Hy galop vinnig na die grot en Sophie moet net keer dat sy nie uit sy sak val nie.
Die GSR rol die rotsdeur weg en beweeg vinnig bin—
uetoe. “Bly net daar, my lamskat,” sê hy, “ons doen nou gróót grapperasie.” Hy hardloop na die verste hoek van die grot en gryp die trompet-affere wat hy gedra het toe Sophie hom die eerste keer gesien het. Met die koffer nog steeds in die een hand en die trompet-affere in die ander, streep hy by die grot uit.
Sophie wag nuuskierig om te sien wat gaan gebeur.
“Wip jou kopkens op,” beveel die GSR, “dan jy goeie prent kry van grapperasie.”
Soos die GSR nader aan die slapende reuse kom, be
weeg hy al stadiger. Hy loop saggies op sy tone tot by die aaklige gedrogte, wat nog een stryk deur lustig snork. Die reuse lyk soos vuil, vieslike duiwels en Sophie gril. Die GSR kruip nog nader. Verby die Afvalvreter, verby die Bloedslurper, verby die Kindkouer. Toe gaan staan hy langs die Hompvleisvreter. Hy wys met sy vin-ger na hom, kyk na Sophie en knipoog.
Hy kniel op die grond, maak die koffer oop en haal
die fles waarin die nagmerrie is versigtig uit.
Teen dié tyd het Sophie al geraai wat sy plan is!
O aarde! dink sy. Dié speletjie kan gevaarlik raak! Sy kruip dieper in die sak weg sodat net haar oë uitsteek. Sy hou asem op vir wat gaan gebeur.

Hulle is nou sowat tien tree van die Hompvleisvreter se kop. Die gorrelende-grommende keelgeluide wat hy maak is angswekkend. Af en toe peul groot spoegborrels tussen sy twee dik lippe uit en bars dan met 'n groot plof! wat sy hele gesig met spoeg besproei.
Versigtig word die glasfles nou oopgemaak. Die krullende, draaiende, bleekrooi troggelstamper word by die wye kant van die trompet ingegooi. Die GSR mik met die trompet na Hompvleisvreter se gesig, trek sy asem baie diep in en blaas so hard whoefff! dat sy wange eintlik bol staan.
Sophie sien hoe 'n bleekrooi ding na die reus se ge-sig flits.
'n Oomblik lê daar 'n wasigheid om sy mond.
Dan is dit weg. Dit lyk asof dit deur die reus se neus opgesuig is, maar alles gebeur so vinnig dat Sophie van niks seker is nie.
"Kom ons skuiwe tot waar veilig," fluister die GSR.
Hy draf so honderd meter weg, hurk laag op die grond en sê: "Nou wag ons vir gerommel en getrommel!"
Hulle hoef nie lank te wag nie.
Meteens word die lug deurboor met die bloedstol-lendste krete wat Sophie nog ooit gehoor het en sy sien hoe die Hompvleisvreter se liggaam - die hele sestien meter - in die lug opstyg en kadwar! op die aarde neer-val. Dan begin die liggaam so gewelddadig krul en draai en stamp en skop dat dit haar skoon benoud maak.
" eeeeeauuuuuu !" bulder die Hompvleisvreter.
" aaaaaiiii ! eeeeuuuu ! einaaaaaaaaa !"
"Hy slaap nog," fluister die GSR. "Die viesaaklige troggelstamper begin hom nou eers troggel en stam per!"
"Goed so!" sê Sophie. Sy kry hom glad nie jammer nie. So 'n wrede reus wat kinders soos suikerklontjies opeet, verdien niks beter nie.
" helllllllp !" skree die Hompvleisvreter. "Hy jaag my! Hy gaan my vang!"
Hy slaan woes met sy arms en bene in die lug. Dis
ongelooflik dat so 'n massiewe kreatuur só heen en weer kan krul en draai!
"Dit Jan!" bulder die Hompvleisvreter. "Dit daardie
miserabele misbaksel Jan! Jan jaag my! Jan draai my binnegoed om! Jan steek my met skerp ding! Jan stamp my holderbolder! Dit vreesvaarlike verskrikking Jan!" Die Hompvleisvreter rol op die grond rond soos 'n groot, krullende, gemartelde slang.
"Wie is die Jan waarvan hy praat?" wil Sophie weet.
"Jan enigste mensdomme wat reuse bang," antwoord die GSR. "Ons almal bevreserig vir Jan. Ons weet Jan bedoemde reusdoodmaker."
"Red my!" skree die Hompvleisvreter. "Genade tog!
Hier kom boontjierank! Hier kom boontjierank nader! Jan, asseblief tog, Jan, moenie steek met boontjierank!" "Ons reuse," verduidelik die

GSR met ’n fluisterstem, “weet nie juis baie van dié Jan. Weet net sy naam Jan en hy bedoemde reusdoodmaker met iets wat hy boontjierank noem. Boontjierank vreesvaarlike ding wat
reuse doodmaak.”
Sophie gaan saggies aan’t lag.
“Waaroor griggel jy?” vra die GSR agterdogtig. “Ek sal jou later sê,” belowe Sophie.
Die aaklige nagmerrie het nou so ’n houvas op die
groot gruwel van ’n Hompvleisvreter dat sy reuse-liggaam byna in knope gedraai is. “Moet dit nie doen, Jan!” kreun en huil hy. “Ek sal jou nooit vreet, Jan! Ek sweer ek eet nie mensdommes!”
“So ’n leuenbek!” brom die GSR.
Net op daardie oomblik vang een van die Hompvleisvreter se wildswaaiende vuiste die Sousdrupper skrams teen die mond. Terselfdertyd skop hy met een van sy voete die Afvalvreter in die maag. Hulle skrik albei wakker en is dadelik op die been.
“Hy slaat my op my smoel!” skree Sousdrupper en bal sy vuiste.
“Hy sloeg my in my pens!” skree Afvalvreter.
Saam bestorm hulle die Hompvleisvreter en dam hom met vuiste en voete by. Hy word van een nagmerrie in ’n ander een wakker.
’n Brullende, stampende, skoppende bakleiery volg waarin die ander nog slapende reuse of op getrap of ge-skop word.
In ’n oogwenk is al nege op hulle voete en ’n woeste inklim-in-die-bondel volg. Hulle slaan en skop en byt rn krap en stamp mekaar dat dit ’n naarheid is. Neuse word plat geslaan. Die bloed loop, en ’n lang ruk rol die lawaai van die woeste geveg soos stormbranders oor (lie geel vlaktes.
Die GSR glimlag die allerlieflikste glimlag. “Ek liefie dit as hulle so taai bakfoeter!” sê hy tevrede.
“Hulle maak mekaar vandag nog dood!” s£ Sophie
“Nooit!” verseker die GSR haar. “Daardie ongedrog-te slaan en slag en sloeg mekaar baiekeer. Nou net wan-ucer donker galop hulle saam weg vir pensopstop.”
“Hulle is grof en rof en gruwelik en afgryslik,” sê
Sophie met mening. “Ek háát hulle.”
Toe die GSR koers kies grot toe, sê hy saggies: “Ons het troggelstamper goed gebruik, dink jy ook?”
“Uitstekend!” stem Sophie saam. “Dit was ’n won
derlike idee.”

14. DREAMS

The Big Friendly Giant was seated at the great table in his cave and he was doing his homework.

Sophie sat cross-legged on the table-top near by, watching him at work.

The glass jar containing the one and only good dream they had caught that day stood between them.

The BFG, with great care and patience, was printing something on a piece of paper with an enormous pencil.

'What are you writing?' Sophie asked him.

'Every dream is having its special label on the bottle,' the BFG said. 'How else could I be finding the one I am wanting in a hurry?'

'But can you really and truly tell what sort of a dream it's going to be simply by listening to it?' Sophie asked.

'I can,' the BFG said, not looking up.

'But how? Is it by the way it hums and buzzes?'

'You is less or more right,' the BFG said. 'Every dream in the world is making a different sort of buzzy-hum music. And these grand swashboggling ears of mine is able to read that music.'

'By music, do you mean tunes?'

'I is not meaning tunes.'

'Then what do you mean?'

'Human beans is having their own music, right or left?'

'Right,' Sophie said. 'Lots of music.'

'And sometimes human beans is very overcome when they is hearing wonderous music. They is getting shivers down their spindels. Right or left?'

'Right,' Sophie said.

'So the music is saying something to them. It is sending a message. I do not think the human beans is knowing what that message is, but they is loving it just the same.'

'That's about right,' Sophie said.

'But because of these jumpsquiffling ears of mine,' the BFG said, 'I is not only able to hear the music that dreams is making but I is understanding it also.'

'What do you mean understanding it?' Sophie said.

'I can read it,' the BFG said. 'It talks to me. It is like a langwitch.'

'I find that just a little hard to believe,' Sophie said.

'I'll bet you is also finding it hard to believe in quogwinkles,' the BFG said, 'and how they is visiting us from the stars.'

'Of course I don't believe that,' Sophie said.

The BFG regarded her gravely with those huge eyes of his. 'I hope you will forgive me,' he said, 'if I tell you that human beans is thinking they is very clever, but they is not. They is nearly all of them notmuchers and squeakpips.'

'I beg your pardon,' Sophie said.

'The matter with human beans,' the BFG went on, 'is that they is absolutely refusing to believe in anything unless they is actually seeing it right in front of their own schnozzles. Of course quogwinkles is existing. I is meeting them oftenly. I is even chittering to them.' He turned away contemptuously from Sophie and resumed his writing.

Sophie moved over to read what he had written so far. The letters were printed big and bold, but were not very well formed. Here is what it said:

THIS DREAM IS ABOUT HOW I IS SAVING MY TEECHER FROM DROWNING. I IS DIVING INTO THE RIVER FROM A HIGH BRIDGE AND I IS DRAGGING MY TEECHER TO THE BANK AND THEN I IS GIVING HIM THE KISS OF DEATH…

'The kiss of what?' Sophie asked.

The BFG stopped writing and raised his head slowly. His eyes rested on Sophie's face. 'I is telling you once before,' he said quietly, 'that I is never having a chance to go to school. I is full of mistakes. They is not my fault. I do my best. You is a lovely little girl, but please remember that you is not exactly Miss Knoweverything yourself.'

'I'm sorry,' Sophie said. 'I really am. It is very rude of me to keep correcting you.'

The BFG gazed at her for a while longer, then he bent his head again to his slow laborious writing.

'Tell me honestly,' Sophie said. 'If you blew this dream into my bedroom when I was asleep, would I really and truly start dreaming about how I saved my teacher from drowning by diving off the bridge?'

'More,' the BFG said. 'A lot more. But I cannot be squibbling the whole gropefluncking dream on a titchy bit of paper. Of course there is more.'

The BFG laid down his pencil and placed one massive ear close to the jar. For about thirty seconds he listened intently. 'Yes,' he said, nodding his great head solemnly up and down. 'This dream is continuing very nice. It has a very dory-hunky ending.'

'How does it end?' Sophie said. 'Please tell me.'

'You would be dreaming,' the BFG said, 'that the morning after you is saving the teacher from the river, you is arriving at school and you is seeing all the five hundred pupils sitting in the assembly hall, and all the teachers as well, and the head teacher is then standing up and saying, "I is wanting the whole school to give three cheers for Sophie

because she is so brave and is saving the life of our fine arithmatic teacher, Mr Figgins, who was unfortunately pushed off the bridge into the river by our gym-teacher, Miss Amelia Upscotch. So three cheers for Sophie!" And the whole school is then cheering like mad and shouting bravo well done, and, for ever after that, even when you is getting your sums all gungswizzled and muggled up, Mr Figgins is always giving you ten out of ten and writing Good Work Sophie in your exercise book. Then you is waking up.'

'I like that dream,' Sophie said.

'Of course you like it,' the BFG said. 'It is a phizzwizard.' He licked the back of the label and stuck it on the jar. 'I is usually writing a bit more than this on the labels,' he said. 'But you is watching me and making me jumpsy.'

'I'll go and sit somewhere else,' Sophie said.

'Don't go,' he said. 'Look in the jar carefully and I think you will be seeing this dream.'

Sophie peered into the jar and there, sure enough, she saw the faint translucent outline of something about the size of a hen's egg. There was just a touch of colour in it, a pale sea-green, soft and shimmering and very beautiful. There it lay, this small oblong sea-green jellyish thing, at the bottom of the jar, quite peaceful, but pulsing gently, the whole of it moving in and out ever so slightly, as though it were breathing.

'It's moving!' Sophie cried. 'It's alive!'

'Of course it's alive.'

'What will you feed it on?' Sophie asked.

'It is not needing any food,' the BFG told her.

'That's cruel,' Sophie said. 'Everything alive needs food of some sort. Even trees and plants.'

'The north wind is alive,' the BFG said. 'It is moving. It touches you on the cheek and on the hands. But nobody is feeding it.'

Sophie was silent. This extraordinary giant was disturbing her ideas. He seemed to be leading her towards mysteries that were beyond her understanding.

'A dream is not needing anything,' the BFG went on. 'If it is a good one, it is waiting peaceably for ever until it is released and allowed to do its job. If it is a bad one, it is always fighting to get out.'

The BFG stood up and walked over to one of the many shelves and placed the latest jar among the thousands of others.

'Please can I see some of the other dreams?' Sophie asked him.

The BFG hesitated. 'Nobody is ever seeing them before,' he said. 'But perhaps after all I is letting you have a little peep.' He picked her up off the table and stood her on the palm of one of his huge hands. He carried her towards the shelves. 'Over here is some of the good

dreams,' he said. 'The phizzwizards.'
'Would you hold me closer so I can read the labels,' Sophie said.
'My labels is only telling bits of it,' the BFG said. 'The dreams is usually much longer. The labels is just to remind me.'
Sophie started to read the labels. The first one seemed long enough to her. It went right round the jar, and as she read it, she had to keep turning the jar. This is what it said:
TODAY I IS SITTING IN CLASS AND I DISCOVER THAT IF I IS STARING VERY HARD AT MY TEECHER IN A SPHESHAL WAY, I IS ABLE TO PUT HER TO SLEEP. SO I KEEP STARING AT HER AND IN THE END HER HEAD DROPS ON TO HER DESK AND SHE GOES FAST TO SLEEP AND SNORKLES LOUDLY. THEN IN MARCHES THE HEAD TEACHER AND HE SHOUTS 'WAKE UP MISS PLUMRIDGE! HOW DARE YOU GO TO SLEEP IN CLASS! GO FETCH YOUR HAT AND COTE AND LEAVE THIS SCHOOL FOR EVER! YOU IS SACKED!' BUT IN A JIFFY I IS PUTTING THE HEAD TEECHER TO SLEEP AS WELL, AND HE JUST CRUMPLES SLOWLY TO THE FLOOR LIKE A LUMP OF JELLY AND THERE HE LIES ALL IN A HEAP AND STARTS SNORKELLING EVEN LOWDER THAN MISS PLUMRIDGE. AND THEN I IS HEARING MY MUMMY'S VOICE SAYING WAKE UP YOUR BREKFUST IS REDDY.
'What a funny dream,' Sophie said.
'It's a ringbeller,' the BFG said. 'It's whoppsy.'
Inside the jar, just below the edge of the label, Sophie could see the putting-to-sleep dream lying peacefully on the bottom, pulsing gently, sea-green like the other one, but perhaps a trifle larger.
'Do you have separate dreams for boys and for girls?' Sophie asked.
'Of course,' the BFG said. 'If I is giving a girl's dream to a boy, even if it was a really whoppsy girl's dream, the boy would be waking up and thinking what a rotbungling grinksludging old dream that was.'
'Boys would,' Sophie said.
'These here is all girls' dreams on this shelf,' the BFG said.
'Can I read a boy's dream?'
'You can,' the BFG said, and he lifted her to a higher shelf. The label on the nearest boy's-dream jar read as follows:
I IS MAKING MYSELF A MARVELUS PAIR OF SUCTION BOOTS AND WHEN I PUT THEM ON I IS ABEL TO WALK STRATE UP THE KITSHUN WALL AND ACROSS THE CEILING. WELL, I IS WALKING UPSIDE DOWN ON THE CEILING WEN MY BIG SISTER COMES IN AND SHE IS STARTING TO YELL AT ME AS SHE ALWAYS DOES, YELLING WOT ON EARTH IS YOU DOING UP THERE WALKING ON THE CEILING AND I LOOKS DOWN AT HER AND I SMILES AND I SAYS I TOLD YOU YOU WAS DRIVING ME UP THE WALL AND NOW YOU HAS DONE IT.

'I find that one rather silly,' Sophie said.
'Boys wouldn't,' the BFG said, grinning. 'It's another ringbeller. Perhaps you has seen enough now.'
'Let me read another boy's one,' Sophie said. The next label said:
THE TELLYFONE RINGS IN OUR HOUSE AND MY FATHER PICKS IT UP AND SAYS IN HIS VERY IMPORTANT TELLYFONE VOICE 'SIMPKINS SPEAKING'.THEN HIS FACE GOES WHITE AND HIS VOICE GOES ALL FUNNY AND HESAYS 'WHAT!WHO?'AND THEN HE SAYS 'YES SIR I UNDERSTAND SIR BUT SURELY IT IS ME YOU IS WISHING TO SPEKE TO SIR NOT MY LITTLE SON?' MY FATHER'S FACE IS GOING FROM WHITE TO DARK PURPEL AND HE IS GULPING LIKE HE HAS A LOBSTER STUCK IN HIS THROTE AND THEN AT LAST HE IS SAYING 'YES SIR VERY WELL SIR I WILL GET HIM SIR' AND HE TURNS TO ME AND HE SAYS IN A RATHER RESPECKFUL VOICE 'IS YOU KNOWING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES?' AND I SAYS 'NO BUT I EXPECT HE IS HEARING ABOUT ME.' THEN I IS HAVING A LONG TALK ON THE FONE AND SAYING THINGS LIKE 'LET ME TAKE CARE OF IT, MR PRESIDENT. YOU'LL BUNGLE IT ALL UP IF YOU DO IT YOUR WAY'.AND MY FATHER'S EYES IS GOGGLING RIGHT OUT OF HIS HEAD AND THAT IS WHEN I IS HEARING MY FATHER'S REAL VOICE SAYING GET UP YOU LAZY SLOB OR YOU WILL BE LATE FOR SKOOL.
'Boys are crazy,' Sophie said. 'Let me read this next one.' Sophie started reading the next label:
I IS HAVING A BATH AND I IS DISCOVERING THAT IF I PRESS QUITE HARD ON MY TUMMY BUTTON A FUNNY FEELING COMES OVER ME AND SUDDENLEY MY LEGS IS NOT THERE NOR IS MY ARMS. IN FACT I HAS BECOME ABSOLOOTLY INVISIBLE ALL
OVER. I IS STILL THERE BUT NO ONE CAN SEE ME NOT EVEN MYSELF. SO MY MUMMY COMES IN AND SAYS 'WHERE IS THAT CHILD! HE WAS IN THE BATH A MINIT AGO AND HE CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE WASHED HIMSELF PROPERLY!' SO I SAYS 'HERE I IS' AND SHE SAYS 'WHERE?' AND I SAYS 'HERE' AND SHE SAYS 'WHERE?' AND I SAYS 'HERE!' AND SHE YELLS 'HENRY! COME UP QUICK!' AND WHEN MY DADDY RUSHES IN I IS WASHING MYSELF AND MY DADDY SEES THE SOAP FLOATING AROUND IN THE AIR BUT OF CORSE HE IS NOT SEEING ME AND HE SHOUTS 'WHERE ARE YOU BOY?' AND I SAYS 'HERE' AND HE SAYS 'WHERE?'AND I SAYS 'HERE'AND HE SAYS 'WHERE?'AND I SAYS 'HERE!'AND HE SAYS 'THE SOAP,BOY!THE SOAP!IT'S FLYING IN THE AIR!' THEN I PRESS MY TUMMY BUTTON AGAIN AND NOW I IS VISIBLE. MY DADDY IS SQUIFFY WITH EXCITEMENT AND HE SAYS 'YOU IS THE INVISIBLE BOY!' AND I SAYS 'NOW I IS GOING TO HAVE SOME FUN,' SO WHEN I IS OUT OF THE BATH AND I HAVE DRIED MYSELF

I PUT ON MY DRESSING-GOWN AND SLIPPERS AND I PRESS MY TUMMY BUTTON AGAIN TO BECOME INVISIBLE AND I GO DOWN INTO THE TOWN AND WALK IN THE STREETS. OF CORSE ONLY ME IS INVISIBLE BUT NOT THE THINGS I IS WEARING SO WHEN PEEPLE IS SEEING A DRESSING-GOWN AND SLIPPERS FLOATING ALONG THE STREET WITH NOBODY IN IT THERE IS A PANIC WITH EVERYBODY YELLING 'A GHOST! A GHOST!' AND PEEPLE IS SCREAMING LEFT AND RIGHT AND BIG STRONG POLICEMEN IS RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES AND BEST OF ALL I SEE MR GRUMMIT MY ALGEBRA TEECHER COMING OUT OF A PUB AND I FLOAT UP TO HIM AND SAY 'BOO!' AND HE LETS OUT A FRIGHTSOME HOWL AND DASHES BACK INTO THE PUB AND THEN I IS WAKING UP AND FEELING HAPPY AS A
WHIFFSQUIDDLER.

'Pretty ridiculous,' Sophie said. All the same, she couldn't resist reaching down and pressing her own tummy button to see if it worked. Nothing happened.

'Dreams is very mystical things,' the BFG said. 'Human beans is not understanding them at all. Not even their brainiest prossefors is understanding them. Has you seen enough?'

'Just this last one,' Sophie said. 'This one here.'

She started reading:

I HAS RITTEN A BOOK AND IT IS SO EXCITING NOBODY CAN PUT IT DOWN. AS SOON AS YOU HAS RED THE FIRST LINE YOU IS SO HOOKED ON IT YOU CANNOT STOP UNTIL THE LAST PAGE. IN ALL THE CITIES PEEPLE IS WALKING IN THE STREETS BUMPING INTO EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEIR FACES IS BURIED IN MY BOOK AND DENTISTS IS READING IT AND TRYING TO FILL TEETHS AT THE SAME TIME BUT NOBODY MINDS BECAUSE THEY IS ALL READING IT TOO IN THE DENTIST'S CHAIR. DRIVERS IS READING IT WHILE DRIVING AND CARS IS CRASHING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. BRAIN SURGEONS IS READING IT WHILE THEY IS OPERATING ON BRAINS AND AIRLINE PILOTS IS READING IT AND GOING TO TIMBUCTOO INSTEAD OF LONDON. FOOTBALL PLAYERS IS READING IT ON THE FIELD BECAUSE THEY CAN'T PUT IT DOWN AND SO IS OLIMPICK RUNNERS WHILE THEY IS RUNNING. EVERYBODY HAS TO SEE WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT IN MY BOOK AND WHEN I
WAKE UP I IS STILL TINGLING WITH EXCITEMENT AT BEING THE GREATEST RITER THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN UNTIL MY MUMMY COMES IN AND SAYS I WAS LOOKING AT YOUR ENGLISH EXERCISE BOOK LAST NITE AND REALLY YOUR SPELLING IS ATROSHUS SO IS YOUR PUNTULASHON.

'That's enough for now,' the BFG said. 'There is dillions more but my arm is getting tired holding you up.'

‘What are all those over there?’ Sophie said. ‘Why have they got such tiny labels?’
‘That,’ the BFG said, ‘is because one day I is catching so many dreams I is not having the time or energy to write out long labels. But there is enough to remind me.’
‘Can I look?’ Sophie said.
The long-suffering BFG carried her across to the jars she was pointing to. Sophie read them rapidly, one after the other:
‘What amazes me,’ Sophie said, ‘is how you ever learned to write in the first place.’
‘Ah,’ said the BFG. ‘I has been wondering how long it is before you is asking me that.’
‘Considering you never went to school, I think it’s quite marvellous,’ Sophie said. ‘How did you learn?’
The BFG crossed the cave and opened a tiny secret door in the wall. He took out a book, very old and tattered. By human standards, it was an ordinary sized book, but it looked like a postage stamp in his huge hand.
‘One night,’ he said, ‘I is blowing a dream through a window and I sees this book lying on the little boy’s bedroom table. I wanted it so very badly, you understand. But I is refusing to steal it. I would never do that.’
‘So how did you get it?’ Sophie asked.
‘I borrowed it,’ the BFG said, smiling a little. ‘Just for a short time I borrowed it.’
‘How long have you had it?’ Sophie asked.
‘Perhaps only about eighty years,’ the BFG said. ‘Soon I shall be putting it back.’
‘And that’s how you taught yourself to write?’ Sophie asked him.
‘I is reading ithundreds of times,’ the BFG said. ‘And I is still reading it and teaching new words to myself and how to write them. It is the most scrumdiddlyumptious story.’
Sophie took the book out of his hand. Nicholas Nickleby,’ she read aloud.
‘By Dahl’s Chickens,’ the BFG said.
‘By who?’ Sophie said.
Just then, there came a tremendous noise of galloping feet from outside the cave. ‘What’s that?’ Sophie cried.
‘That is all the giants zippfizzing off to another country to guzzle human beans,’ the BFG said. He quickly popped Sophie into his waistcoat pocket, then hurried to the cave entrance and rolled back the stone.
Sophie, peeping out of her spy-hole, saw all nine of the fearsome giants coming past at full gallop.

‘Where is you off to tonight?’ shouted the BFG.

‘We is all of us flushbunking off to England tonight,’ answered the Fleshlumpeater as they went galloping past. ‘England is a luctuous land and we is fancying a few nice little English chiddlers.’

‘I,’ shouted the Maidmasher, ‘is knowing where there is a gigglehouse for girls and I is guzzling myself full as a frothblower!’

‘And I knows where there is a bogglebox for boys!’ shouted the Gizzardgulper. ‘All I has to do is reach in and grab myself a handful! English boys is tasting extra lickswishy!’

In a few seconds, the nine galloping giants were out of sight.

‘What did he mean?’ Sophie said, poking her head out of the pocket. ‘What is a gigglehouse for girls?’

‘He is meaning a girls’ school,’ the BFG said. ‘He will be eating them by the bundle.’

‘Oh no!’ cried Sophie.

‘And boys from a boys’ school,’ said the BFG.

‘It mustn’t happen!’ Sophie cried out. ‘We’ve got to stop them! We can’t just sit here and do nothing!’

‘There’s not a thing we can do,’ the BFG said. ‘We is helpless as horsefeathers.’ He sat down on a large craggy blue rock near the entrance to his cave. He took Sophie from his pocket and put her beside him on the rock. ‘It is now quite safe for you to be outside until they is coming back,’ he said.

The sun had dipped below the horizon and it was getting dark.

14. Drome

Die Groot Sagmoedige Reus sit by die tafel en doen sy huiswerk.
Sophie sit kruisbeen voor hom en kyk hoe hy werk.
Die glasfles met die enigste goeie droom wat hulle daardie dag gevang het, staan tussen hulle.
Met groot versigtigheid en geduld skryf die GSR met
’n enorme potlood iets op ’n stuk papier. “Wat skrywe jy?” vra Sophie.
“Elke droom kry spesinjale etterket op fles,” verduidelik hy. “Anders hoe kry ek hulle wanneer ek jaagtig?” “Kan jy regtig deur net daarna te luister, sê waiter soort droom dit is?”
“Ek kan, ja,” antwoord die GSR sonder om op te
kyk.
“Hoe? Deur te luister na die gebrom en gezoem?”
“Jy bietjie regs,” sê die GSR. “Elke droom het eie gezoem. Hierdie bestommende ore van my kan al die musiek hoor.”
“As jy praat van musiek, bedoel jy ’n wysie?” vra
Sophie.
“Nee, glattegeheel nie.” “Wat bedoel jy dan?”
“Mensdommes het eie musiek. Regs of links?”
“Reg,” sê Sophie. “Mense het baie soorte musiek.” “En somtyds mensdommes baie aangedaan as hulle
wondervolle musiek hoor. Hulle kry ruggrillings by
grate af. Regs of links?”
“Regs - ag, ek bedoel reg,” sê Sophie.
“Die musiek prááát met mensdommes. Mensdommes bestaan nie altyd boodskap, maar tog liefie hulle mu siek.”
“Dit is so,” sê Sophie.
“Met my ekstra-uitwonderlike ore,” vervolg die
GSR, “kan ek nie net hoor, maar ook bestáán.” “Hoe bedoel jy verstaan?” vra Sophie.
“Ek léés,” sê die GSR. “Dit prááát. Dit soos taal vir my.”
“Dis bietjie moeilik om te glo,” sê Sophie.
“Vir jou dit ook moeilik om te glo aan kwakkiekreukels,” sê die GSR, “en hoedat hulle van sterre af by ons kom kruier.”
“Natuurlik glo ek dit nie!” sê Sophie.
Hie GSR kyk ernstig met sy groot oë na haar. “Ek hoop jy my begewe,” sê hy, “as ek sê mensdommes dink hulle baie slim. Maar mensdommes dom. Byna al-mal jas-asse en dom-esels.”
“Baie dankie!” sê Sophie verontwaardig.
“Die moeilikheid met mensdommes,” gaan die GSR voort, “hulle weier om te glo wat hulle oogkykers nie sien. Natúúrlik daar

kwakkiekreukels op sterre. Ek sien hulle baie. Ek brabbel selfs met hulle.” Hy draai met minagting van haar weg en gaan aan met sy werk. Sophie kruip nader om te sien wat hy tot dusver geskrywe het.
1)ie letters is groot en duidelik maar nie baie goed gevorm nie. Dis wat sy lees:
DIE DROOM VAN HOE EK MY MENEER RED VAN WEGSINK. EK DYK IN RIFIER VAN HOË BRUG EN SLEEP MY MENEER NA WAL EN GEE HOM LONG TOT LONG LEWER.
“Long tot long wát?” vra Sophie.
Die GSR hou op met skrywe. Hy kyk peinsend na Sophie. “Ek het jou oormóre gesê ek nie kans gekry vir skool. Ek weet ek vol van foute. Hulle nie my foute. Ek doen my goedste. Jy dierbare klein meisiekie, maar ver-hou jy ook nie altyd Juffrou-alles-weet.”
“Ek is jammer,” sê Sophie berouvol. “Ek is regtig baie jammer. Dis baie naar van my om jou gedurig in die rede te val.”
Die GSR kyk stil na haar, knik en buk dan om ver-der te skrywe.
“Sê my nou eerlik,” kom dit van Sophie, “as jy hierdie droom in my slaapkamer blaas terwyl ek slaap, sal
ek regtigwaar droom dat ek my meneer van verdrinking red deur van ’n hoë brug af te duik?”
“Nog meer,” sê die GSR, “maar ek kan nie die hele lang flenterdroom kribbel en skrabbcl op hierdie piepelklein stuk papier. Daar baie meer van die droom.”
Die GSR sit die yslike potlood neer en druk sy een
oor teen die fles. Hy luister fyn, skud sy massiewe kop op en af en sê uiteindelik: “Ja, hierdie droom werk goe-ter. Dit het wonderbedaarlike einde.”
“Hoe eindig dit?” vra Sophie. “Ag, sê my toe!”
“Jy droom,” sê die GSR, “nadat jy jou meneer van versinking red, jy by skool kom en sien al die vyfhon-derd kidderen in die saal sit met die menere en juf-frouens daarby en die skoolhoof staan op en sê: ‘Drie hoera’s vir Sophie want sy so dapper soos ’n klapper. Sy red ons goeie wiskunde-onderwyser, meneer Vyeblaar. Hy deur ons jolige sportjuffrou, juffrou Perske-pit, van die brug afgestoot, dat hy in die rivier val. Drie hoera’s vir Sophie!’ En die hele skool juig malkop en skree ‘mooi so’ en daarna, al foeter jy al jou somme op, gee meneer Vyeblaar jou tien uit tien en skryf in jou oefeningboek: ‘Goeie werk, Sophie!’ Dan word jy wakker.”
“Ek hou van daardie droom!” lag Sophie.
“Natuurlik hou jy daarvan,” sê die GSR. “Dit ’n vertower ing-droom. ’ ’
Hy lek die agterkant van die etiket met sy groot, lang
long en plak dit op die fles. “Ek skryf gewoontelik meer up etterkette,” sê hy, “maar jy kyk so na my dat ek liorriepieperig raak.”
“Ek sal êrens anders gaan sit,” bied Sophie aan.

“Nee, nie weggaan. Kyk goed na fles. Miskien sien jy droom.”
Sophie loer in die fles en daar, so seker soos nou,
sien sy iets so groot soos ’n hoendereier. Daar is ’n sweempie van kleur in, so ’n ligte seegroen, sag en skit-lerend en baie pragtig. Die klein langwerpige seegroen jellie-agtige voorwerp lê heel rustig onder in die fles. Dit pols stadig in en uit, soos iets wat saggies asemhaal.
“Dit roer!” roep Sophie opgewonde uit. “Dit lewe!”
“Natuurlik lewe dit!” “Gaan jy dit voer?”
“Nee, ’n droom het nie kos nodig.”
“Maar dis wreed,” sê Sophie. “Alles wat lewe, het inos kos nodig. Selfs bome en plante en blomme en . .
“Die noordewind ook lewe,” val die GSR haar in die
rede. “Dit vat aan hande en sjoeps om bene maar jy gee hóm nie kos!”
Sophie bly stil. Hierdie uitsonderlike reus krap haar
idees skoon om. Dis kompleet asof hy haar na geheime lei wat sy nog nie kan verstaan nie.
“’n Droom het niks nodig,” vervolg die GSR.
“Goeie droom, wag behoorsaam tot ek dit blaas in kidderenkamer. Slegte droom baie greterig vir uit-kom.”
Die GSR staan op en loop na een van die baie rakke
en plaas die nuutste droom tussen dié wat reeds daar staan.
“Laat ek nog van die drome lees!” smeek Sophie.
Die GSR huiwer. “Niemand hulle nog nooit gesien. Maar miskien gee ek jou loertjie.” Hy tel haar van die tafel op en hou haar in sy een hand. Hy dra haar na een! van die rakke. “Hier goeie drome,” sê hy. “Hulle almal vertowerings.”
“Hou my asseblief bietjie nader sodat ek die etikette kan lees,” vra Sophie.
“My etterkette vertel net so bietjie-ietsie,” sê die GSR. “Die droom baie langer. Die etterkette net hup-skootjie vir onthou.”
Sophie lees die eerste etiket. Dis nogal lank en sy moet elke keer die fles omdraai want die etiket is reg rondom die fles geplak.
Dis wat daarop staan:
VANDAG SIT EK IN DIE KLAS EN ONTDEK AS EK KYK NA JUVROU OP SPESINJALE MANIER EK HAAR AAN SLAAP KAN KYK. EK KYK EN KYK EN HAAR KOP VAL OP TAVEL EN SY SLAAP EN SNORKEL BAIE HARD. IN KOM SKOOLHOOF EN HY SKREE “WORD WAKKER JUVROU! HOE DURF JY SLAAP IN KLAS? GAAN HAAL HOED EN JAS EN WEG IS JY VAN SKOOL VIR ALTYD. EK STEEK JOU SOMMER NOU IN DIE STRAAT.” MAAR GOUER AS GISTER KYK EK HOM OOK AAN SLAAP EN HY VAL NEER SOOS JELLIEVIS EN DAAR LÊ HY EN SNORKEL NOG HARDER AS JUVROU. DAN HOOR EK MY MA SÊ “WORD WAKKER JOU OGGENDBYT KLAAR.”
“Wat ’n eienaardige droom!” merk Sophie op.

“Dit ’n ringeldingel!” sê die GSR. “Dit ’n woefel-waffer!”
Diep onder in die fles sien Sophie hoe rustig die aan—
die-slaap-kyk droom lê. Sy sien die effense roering van die droom, liggroen soos die ander een.
“Het jy verskillende drome vir seuns en meisies?” vra
sy-
“O ja,” antwoord die GSR. “As ek vir seun ’n
meisiekie-droom gee, selfs ’n ringeldingel woefelrige meisiekie-droom, sal hy sê: ‘Sies, dit vritsige, vrotsige, rotterige droom!’”
“Ja-nee, ek kan dink ’n seun sal so sê!”
“Die flesse op hierdie rak almal meisiekie-drome,” sê die GSR.
“Mag ek ’n seun se droom lees?” vra Sophie.
“Jy kan maar,” sê die GSR en hy lig haar hoër sodat sy by die flesse op die boonste rak kan kom. Die naaste etiket lui as volg:
EK MAAK WONDERLIKE PAAR SUIGSKOENE EN AS EK HUL LE AANTREK KAN EK TEEN KOMBUISMUUR OPLOOP EN DWARSOOR PLAVON. NOU JA, EK LOOP ONDERSTEBO OP PLAVON TOE MY GROOT SISTER INKOM EN SY SKRIE VIR MY SOES ALTYT WAT MAAK JY OP DIE PLAVON. SO EK KYK AF NA HAAR EN EK SÊ EK HET MOS VIR JOU GESÊ JY SAL MY NOG EENDAG DEUR DIE DAK LAAT GAAN EN NOU HET JY.
“Ek vind dit baie laf,” sê Sophie.
“Seuns sal nie,” lag die GSR. “Dit ook ’n ringeldingel. Maar nou het jy genoeg gelees.”
“Nog een, asseblief tog!” Die volgende etiket lui:
DIE TELLIEFOON LUI BY ONS HUIS EN MY PA TEL DIT OP EN SÊ IN SY BAIE BELANGRIKE TELLIEFOONSTEM “SMIT WAT PRAAT” EN DAN WORD SY GESIG WIT EN SY STEM WORD SNAAKS EN HY SÊ “WAT? WIE?” EN DAN “JA MENEER EK BEGRYP, MAAR U WIL SEKER MET MY PRAAT EN NIE MET MY KLEIN SEUNTJIE NIE?” MY PA SE GESIG GAAN NOU VAN WIT NA PERS EN HY SLUK ASOF DAAR ’N KREWEL IN SY KEEL EN DAN SÊ HY “JA GOED, EK SAL HOM KRY MENEER” EN DAN DRAAI HY NA MY. “KEN JY DIE PRESIDENT VAN DIE VERENIGDE STATE VAN AMERIKA?” VRA HY VIR MY EN EK SÊ “NEE. MAAR HY HET SEKER AL VAN MY GEHOOR.” DAN HET EK ‘N LANG GESELS MET DIE PRESIDENT OP DIE TELLIEFOON EN SÊ GOED SOOS “LAAT ÉK DIT DOEN ME NEER DIE PRESIDENT,” EN “JY SAL DIT NET OPMORS AS JY DIT SELF DOEN.” EN MY PA SE OË PEUL OMTRENT UIT SY KOP. EN DIT DAN WAT EK MY PA SE REGTE STEM HOOR WAT SÊ “STAAN OP EN TREK JOU AAN JY LAAT VIR SKOOL.”
“Seuns kan hulle tog so verbeel!” sê Sophie en trek haar neus vir die droom op. “Laat ek gou die volgende een lees, miskien is dit interessanter.”

EK BAD EN EK ONTDEK DAT AS EK HARD DRUK OP MY MAAGKNOPPIE EK ’N SNAAKSE GEVOEL KRY EN SKIELIK MY BENE NIE MEER DAAR NIE EN OOK NIE MY ARMS. OM DIE WAARHEID TE SÊ EK NOU ONSIGBAAR ORAL. EK NOG DAAR MAAR NIEMAND KAN MY SIEN, NIE EENS EKSELF. MY MA KOM BINNE EN SÊ WAAR DAARDIE KIND? HY ’N MINUUT GE-LEDE NOG IN DIE BAD EN HY HET HOMSELF BESLIS NIE ORDENTLIK GEWAS. SO EK SÊ “EK HIER” EN SY SÊ “WAAR” EN EK SÊ “HIER” EN SY SKREE “HENDRIK, KOM GOU HIER” EN AS MY PA KOM, BEGIN EK MY WAS EN HY SIEN DIE SEEP IN DIE LUG RONDWAAI MAAR HY SIEN NIE VIR MY EN HY SKREE “SEUN WAAR JY?” EN EK SÊ “HIER” EN HY SÊ “WAAR?” EN HY SÊ “DIE SEEP, SEUN, DIT SWEEF IN DIE LUG.” DAN DRUK EK WEER MY MAAGKNOPPIE EN NOU KAN HULLE MY SIEN. MY PA SKOON OP HOL VAN OPGEWONDEN-HEID EN HY SÊ “JY NOU ONSIGBARE SEUN” EN EK SÊ “NOU GAAN EK PRET HÊ.” TOE KLIM EK UIT DIE BAD, DROOG MY AF EN TREK MY KAMERJAS EN PANTOFFELS AAN. EK DRUK WEER OP MY MAAGKNOPPIE OM ONSIGBAAR TE WORD EN LOOP IN STRATE ROND. EK ONSIGBAAR, SO DIE MENSE
SIEN NET KAMERJAS EN PANTOFFELS RONDLOOP MET NIEMAND BINNE-IN. DIE MENSE WORD BANG EN SÊ “SPOOK,
SPOOK.” DIE MENSE HARTLOOP ROND EN GROOT STERK
POELLIESMAN HARTLOOP WEG, BAIE VINNIG. EN BESTE GRAP: EK SIEN MENEER GROMMER - MY MENEER - KOM UIT KROEG EN EK SWEEF NA HOM EN SÊ “BOE!” HY GEE
EEN VREESVAARLIKE KREET EN HARTLOOP TERUG NA KROEG EN EK WORD WAKKER EN VOEL SO LEKKER SOOS
WOEFEL-WAFFEL.

“Baie laf,” sê Sophie maar sy kan haar nie daarvan weerhou om op haar eie naeltjie te druk om te sien of dit nie dalk werk nie. Maar daar gebeur niks.

“Drome baie geheimrige dinge,” sê die GSR.

“Mensdommes bestaan hulle nie mooi. Nie eens slim-merige perfesters. Het jy nou genoeg gesien?”

“Nog net hierdie een, asseblief,” en Sophie wys na ’n fles ’n entjie verder.

Sy begin lees.

EK SKRYF ’N BOEK BAIE OPWINDENT NIEMANT KAN DIT NEERSIT SO GOU JY EERSTE BLATSY LEES KAN JY NIE OPHOU TOT LAASTE BLATSY. IN AL DIE STEDE BOTS MENSE TEEN MEKAAR WANT NEUSE IS VASGEDRUK IN MY BOEK EN TANDEDOKTERS LEES UIT BOEK TERWYL HULLE TANDE MET EEN HAND STOP MAAR NIEMAND GEE OM WANT ALMAL LEES MY BOEK OOK AS HULLE BESTIER EN MOTORS BOTS REGOOR LANT. KOPDOKTERS LEES DIT

TERWYL HULLE OPEREER EN VLIENIERS LEES DIT EN RY NA TIMBOEKTO IN PLAAS VAN NA LONDEN. VOETBALSPELERS LEES DIT OP DIE VELT WANT HUL KAN DIT NIE NEERSIT EN OLIMPIESE ATLETE LEES DIT TERWYL HULLE HARTLOOP. ALMAL WIL SIEN WAT GEBEUR IN MY BOEK EN AS EK WAKKER WORD SUG EK NOG VAN OPGEWONDENHEIT WANT EK GROOTSTE SKRYWER WAT WÊRELT GEKEN HET DAN KOM MY MA IN EN SÊ "EK HET NOU NET NA DIE OPSTEL GEKYK WAT JY GIS-TERAANT GESKRYWE HET, EN REGTIG JOU SPELLING IS AF-GREISLIK EN JOU LEESTEKENS OOK."
"Dit nou genoeg," sê die GSR. "Daar nog duisende maar my arm raak moeg daarvan om jou so in die lug te hou."
"Wat is daardie goed daarbo?" vra Sophie en maak asof sy hom nie hoor nie. "Hoekom het hulle sulke klein etikette?"
"Eendag ek so baie drome gevang nie tyd vir lang et
terkette. Maar daar genoeg vir onthou." "Mag ek maar kyk?" vra Sophie gretig.
Die geduldige, lankmoedige reus dra haar na die fles-se waarheen sy wys. Sophie lees die een na die ander hardop.
EK KLIM BERG EFFEREST MET NET MY KAT VIR GESELSKAP.
EK VIND MOTOR UIT WAT OP TANDEPASTA LOOP
EK BLUS LIGTE AAN EN AF NES EK WENS.
EK NET AGT JAAR OUT MAAR HET PRAGTIGE BOS BAARD EN AL MY MAATS JARLOES.
EK KAN UIT ENIGE HOË VENSTER ONDERTOE SPRING SON-DER NEK TE BREEK.
EK HET 'N BY WAT RUK-EN-ROL-MUSIEK ZOEM AS HY VLIEG.
"Wat my eintlik verbaas," sê Sophie, "is hoe jy in die eerste plek leer skrywe het."
"Aha!" sê die GSR. "Ek gewonder wanneer jy daardie vraag vra."
"Dis fantasties as mens dink dat jy nog nooit op skool was nie! Hoe op aarde het jy geleer? Jy skryf baie
beter as ek, maar miskien nie heeltemal so mooi nie!"
Die GSR loop na die heel verste hoekie van die grot en maak 'n klein geheime deurtjie oop. Hy haal 'n verslete boekie uit. Aan menslike standaarde gemeet, is dit die grootte van 'n normale boek, maar in sy hand lyk dit soos 'n posseël.
"Een aand," vertel hy, "terwyl ek droom deur die venster van seuntjie blaas, sien ek boek op tafel lê. Ek wou dit baie graag hê, maar ek het weiering dit te gaps."
"Hoe het jy dit dan gekry?" vra Sophie.
"Ek het dit geleen," sê die GSR. "Net vir klein ruk-kie, bestaan mooi."
"Hoe lank het jy dit nou al?" vra Sophie.
"Miskien net omtrent tag-en-taggentig jaarts," sê die
GSR. "Ek sal dit eergister terugversorg."

“En is dit hoe jy jouself leer lees en skrywe het?” vra
Sophie.
“Ek lees dit honderd kere elke dag, en elke keer leer ek nuwe woorde te skrywe. Dit ’n smeklekkerlees-storie.”
Sophie neem die boek by hom. “Nicholas Nickelby,”
lees sy hardop.
“Deur Dahl’s Chickens,” sê die GSR. “Deur wié?” vra Sophie.
Net toe hoor hulle ’n geweldige geraas van dreunende
voete. “Wat gaan nou aan?” wil Sophie verskrik weet.
“Dit net reuse wat nou hoppedaai na ander lande om mensdommes te vroetel,” sê die GSR. Hy stop Sophie weer gou in sy onderbaadjiesak, haas hom na die bek van die grot en rol die rotsdeur weg.
Sophie loer deur die gaatjie en sien hoe die reuse hul
le met ellelange tree weghaas. “Waar jag julle?” skree die GSR.
“Vannag flits ons almal na Engeland,” skree Homp
vleisvreter in die verbygaan. “Engeland smeklekker plek en ons lus Engel-kidderen.”
“Ek weet van giggelhuis vir meisiekies,” skree die
Kindkouer. “Vannag gopsel ek my so dik soos opbla-ser!”
“En ek weet van bromhuis vir seuns,” skree die Af
valvreter, wat agternakom. “Al wat ek moet doen: hand insteek en grypel. Lekkerrr! Engel-kidderen smaak so lekker inkerig.”
Binne enkele oomblikke is al nege reuse weg.
“Wat op aarde bedoel hy met ’n giggelhuis vir meisies?” vra Sophie.
“Hy meen meisieskool. Hy sommer baie meisiekies
opgopsel want hy baie vraterig.” “Ag nee!” roep Sophie uit.
“En seuns van ’n seunskool,” voeg die GSR by.
“Dit mag nie gebeur nie!” sê Sophie beslis. “Ons moet hulle keer. Ons kan nie hier sit en niks doen nie!” “Daar niks wat ons kán doen,” sê die GSR. “Ons so hulpeloos soos perdevere!” Hy gaan sit mismoedig op
’n groot blou rotsblok naby die bek van die grot. Hy
haal Sophie uit sy sak en sit haar op die rots langs hom neer. “Jy nou veilig buite tot hulle terugfoeter,” sê hy. Die son het so pas gesak en dis al sterk skemer.

15.THE GREAT PLAN

‘We’ve absolutely got to stop them!’ Sophie cried. ‘Put me back in your pocket quick and we’ll chase after them and warn everyone in England they’re coming.’

‘Redunculus and um-possiple,’ the BFG said. ‘They is going two times as fast as me and they is finishing their guzzle before we is halfway.’

‘But we can’t just sit here doing nothing!’ Sophie cried. ‘How many girls and boys are they going to eat tonight?’

‘Many,’ the BFG said. ‘The Fleshlumpeating Giant alone has a most squackling whoppsy appetite.’

‘Will he snatch them out of their beds while they’re sleeping?’

‘Like peas out of a poddle,’ the BFG said.

‘I can’t bear to think of it!’ Sophie cried.

‘Then don’t,’ the BFG said. ‘For years and years I is sitting here on this very rock every night after night when they is galloping away, and I is feeling so sad for all the human beans they is going to gobble up. But I has had to get used to it. There is nothing I can do. If I wasn’t a titchy little runty giant only twenty-four feet high then I would be stopping them. But that is absolutely out of the window.’

‘Do you always know where they’re going?’ Sophie asked.

‘Always,’ the BFG said. ‘Every night they is yelling at me as they go bootling past. The other day they was yelling “We is off to Mrs Sippi and Miss Souri to guzzle them both!”’

‘Disgusting,’ Sophie said. ‘I hate them.’

She and the Big Friendly Giant sat quietly side by side on the blue rock in the gathering dusk. Sophie had never felt so helpless in her life. After a while, she stood up and cried out, ‘I can’t stand it! Just think of those poor girls and boys who are going to be eaten alive in a few hours time! We can’t just sit here and do nothing! We’ve got to go after those brutes!’

‘No,’ the BFG said.

‘We must!’ Sophie cried. ‘Why won’t you go?’

The BFG sighed and shook his head firmly. ‘I has told you five or six times,’ he said, ‘and the third will be the last. I is never showing myself to human beans.’

‘Why ever not?’

‘If I do, they will be putting me in the zoo with all the jiggyraffes and cattypiddlers.’

‘Nonsense,’ Sophie said.

‘And they will be sending you straight back to a norphanage,’ the BFG went on. ‘Grown-up human beans is not famous for their kindnesses.

They is all squifflerotters and grinksludgers.’
‘That simply isn’t true!’ Sophie cried angrily. ‘Some of them are very kind indeed.’
‘Who?’ the BFG said. ‘Name one.’
‘The Queen of England,’ Sophie said. ‘You can’t call her a squifflerotter or a grinksludger.’
‘Well …’ the BFG said.
‘You can’t call her a squeakpip or a notmucher either,’ Sophie said, getting angrier and angrier.
‘The Fleshlumpeater is longing dearly to guzzle her up,’ the BFG said, smiling a little now.
‘Who, the Queen?’ Sophie cried, aghast.
‘Yes,’ the BFG answered. ‘Fleshlumpeater says he is never eating a queen and he thinks perhaps she has an especially scrumdiddlyumptious flavour.’
‘How dare he!’ Sophie cried.
‘But Fleshlumpeater says there is too many soldiers around her palace and he dursent try it.’
‘He’d better not!’ Sophie said.
‘He is also saying he would like very much to guzzle one of the soldiers in his pretty red suit but he is worried about those big black furry hats they is wearing. He thinks they might be sticking in his throat.’
‘I hope he chokes,’ Sophie said.
‘Fleshlumpeater is a very careful giant,’ the BFG said.
Sophie was silent for a few moments. Then suddenly, in a voice filled with excitement, she cried out, ‘I’ve got it! By golly, I think I’ve got it!’
‘Got what?’ asked the BFG.
‘The answer!’ cried Sophie. ‘We’ll go to the Queen! It’s a terrific idea! If I went and told the Queen about these disgusting man-eating giants, I’m sure she’d do something about it!’
The BFG looked down at her sadly and shook his head. ‘She is never believing you,’ he said. ‘Never in a month of Mondays.’
‘I think she would.’
‘Never,’ the BFG said. ‘It is sounding such a wonky tall story, the Queen will be laughing and saying “What awful rubbsquash!”’
‘She would not!’
‘Of course she would,’ the BFG said. ‘I has told you before that human beans is simply not believing in giants.’
‘Then it’s up to us to find a way of making her believe in them,’ Sophie said.
‘And how is you getting in to see the Queen anyway?’ the BFG asked.
‘Now hold on a sec,’ Sophie said. ‘Just you hold on a sec because I’ve got another idea.’

'Your ideas is full of crodswoggle,' the BFG said.
'Not this one,' Sophie said. 'You say that if we tell the Queen, she would never believe us?'
'I is certain she wouldn't,' the BFG said.
'But we aren't going to tell her!' Sophie said excitedly. 'We don't have to tell her! We'll make her dream it!'
'That is an even more frothbungling suggestion,' the BFG said. 'Dreams is lots of fun but nobody is believing in dreams either. You is only believing in a dream while you is actually dreaming it. But as soon as you is waking up you is saying "Oh thank goodness it was only a dream".'
'Don't you worry about that part of it,' Sophie said. 'I can fix that.'
'Never can you fix it,' the BFG said.
'I can! I swear I can! But first of all, let me ask you a very important question. Here it is. Can you make a person dream absolutely anything in the world?'
'Anything you like,' the BFG said proudly.
'If I said I wanted to dream that I was in a flying bathtub with silver wings, could you make me dream it?'
'I could,' the BFG said.
'But how?' Sophie said. 'You obviously don't have exactly that dream in your collection.'
'I do not,' the BFG said. 'But I could soon be mixing it up.'
'How could you mix it up?'
'It is a little bit like mixing a cake,' the BFG said. 'If you is putting the right amounts of all the different things into it, you is making the cake come out any way you want, sugary, splongy, curranty, Christmassy or grobswitchy. It is the same with dreams.'
'Go on,' Sophie said.
'I has dillions of dreams on my shelfs, right or left?'
'Right,' Sophie said.
'I has dreams about bathtubs, lots of them. I has dreams about silver wings. I has dreams about flying. So all I has to do is mix those dreams together in the proper way and I is very quickly making a dream where you is flying in a bathtub with silver wings.'
'I see what you mean,' Sophie said. 'But I didn't know you could mix one dream with another.'
'Dreams like being mixed,' the BFG answered. 'They is getting very lonesome all by themselves in those glassy bottles.'
'Right,' Sophie said. 'Now then, do you have dreams about the Queen of England?'
'Lots of them,' the BFG said.
'And about giants?'
'Of course,' the BFG said.

‘And about giants eating people?’
‘Swiggles of them,’ the BFG said.
‘And about little girls like me?’
‘Those is commonest of all,’ the BFG said. ‘I has bottles and bottles of dreams about little girls.’
‘And you could mix them all up just as I want you to?’ Sophie asked, getting more and more excited.
‘Of course,’ the BFG said. ‘But how is this helping us? I think you is barking up the wrong dog.’
‘Now hold on,’ Sophie said. ‘Listen carefully. I want you to mix a dream which you will blow into the Queen of England’s bedroom when she is asleep. And this is how it will go.’
‘Now hang on a mintick,’ the BFG said. ‘How is I possibly going to get near enough to the Queen of England’s bedroom to blow in my dream? You is talking dumbsilly.’
‘I’ll tell you that later,’ Sophie said. ‘For the moment please listen carefully. Here is the dream I want you to mix. Are you paying attention?’
‘Very close,’ the BFG said.
‘I want the Queen to dream that nine disgusting giants, each one about fifty feet tall, are galloping to England in the night. She must dream their names as well. What are their names again?’
‘Fleshlumpeater,’ the BFG said. ‘Manhugger. Bonecruncher. Childchewer. Meatdripper. Gizzardgulper. Maidmasher. Bloodbottler. And the Butcher Boy.’
‘Let her dream all those names,’ Sophie said. ‘And let her dream that they will be creeping into England in the depths of the witching hour and snatching little boys and girls from their beds. Let her dream that they will be reaching into the bedroom windows and pulling the little boys and girls out of their beds and then …’ Sophie paused. ‘Do they eat them on the spot or do they carry them away first?’ she asked.
‘They is usually just popping them straight into their mouths like popcorn,’ the BFG said.
‘Put that in the dream,’ Sophie said. ‘And then … then the dream must say that when their tummies are full,they will go galloping back to Giant Country where no one can find them.’
‘Is that all?’ the BFG said.
‘Certainly not,’ Sophie said. ‘You must then explain to the Queen in her dream that there is a Big Friendly Giant who can tell her where all those beasts are living, so that she can send her soldiers and her armies to capture them once and for all. And now let her dream one last and very important thing. Let her dream that there is a little girl called Sophie sitting on her window-sill who will tell her where the Big Friendly Giant is hiding.’

'Where is he hiding?' asked the BFG.

'We'll come to that later,' Sophie said. 'So the Queen dreams her dream, right?'

'Right,' the BFG said.

'Then she wakes up and the first thing she thinks is oh what a horrid dream. I'm so glad it was only a dream. And then she looks up from her pillow and what does she see?'

'What does she see?' the BFG asked.

'She sees a little girl called Sophie sitting on her window-sill, right there in real life before her very eyes.'

'How is you going to be sitting on the Queen's window-sill, may I beg?' the BFG said.

'You are going to put me there,' Sophie said. 'And that's the lovely part about it. If someone dreams that there is a little girl sitting on her window-sill and then she wakes up and sees that the little girl really is sitting there, that is a dream come true, is it not?'

'I is beginning to see where you is driving to,' the BFG said. 'If the Queen is knowing that part of her dream is true, then perhaps she is believing the rest of it is true as well.'

'That's about it,' Sophie said. 'But I shall have to convince her of that myself.'

'You said you is wanting the dream to say there is a Big Friendly Giant who is also going to talk to the Queen?'

'Absolutely,' Sophie said. 'You must. You are the only one who can tell her where to find the other giants.'

'How is I meeting the Queen?' asked the BFG. 'I is not wanting to be shooted at by her soldiers.'

'The soldiers are only in the front of the Palace,' Sophie said. 'At the back there is a huge garden and there are no soldiers in there at all. There is a very high wall with spikes on it around the garden to stop people climbing in. But you could simply walk over that.'

'How is you knowing all this about the Queen's Palace?' the BFG asked.

'Last year I was in a different orphanage,' Sophie said. 'It was in London and we used to go for walks all around there.'

'Is you helping me to find this Palace?' the BFG asked. 'I has never dared to go hide and sneaking around London in my life.'

'I'll show you the way,' Sophie said confidently.

'I is frightened of London,' the BFG said.

'Don't be,' Sophie said. 'It's full of tiny dark streets and there are very few people about in the witching hour.'

The BFG picked Sophie up between one finger and a thumb and placed her gently in the palm of the other hand. 'Is the Queen's Palace very big?' he asked.

'Huge,' Sophie said.
'Then how is we finding the right bedroom?'
'That's up to you,' Sophie said. 'You're supposed to be an expert at that sort of thing.'
'And you is absolutely sure the Queen will not put me in a zoo with all the cattypiddlers?'
'Of course she won't,' Sophie said. 'You'll be a hero. And you'll never have to eat snozzcumbers again.'
Sophie saw the BFG's eyes widen. He licked his lips.
'You mean it?' he said. 'You really mean it? No more disgustive snozzcumbers?'
'You couldn't get one if you wanted to,' Sophie said. 'Humans don't grow them.'
That did it. The BFG got to his feet. 'When is you wanting me to mix this special dream?' he asked.
'Now,' Sophie said. 'At once.'
'When is we going to see the Queen?' he said.
'Tonight,' Sophie said. 'As soon as you've mixed the dream.'
'Tonight?' the BFG cried. 'Why such a flushbunking flurry?'
'If we can't save tonight's children, we can anyway save tomorrow's,' Sophie said. 'What is more, I'm getting famished. I haven't had a thing to eat for twenty-four hours.'
'Then we had better get crackling,' the BFG said, moving back towards the cave.
Sophie kissed him on the tip of his thumb. 'I knew you'd do it!' she said. 'Come on! Let's hurry!'

15. Die plan

“Ons móét hulle eenvoudig keer! Sit my gou weer in jou sak dan kan ons Engeland toe jaag en die mense gaan waarsku dat die reuse op pad is!”
“Belaklig en onbemoontlik!” sê die Groot Sagmoedige
Reus. “Hulle loop twee maal my galop. Reuse vol-geprop van kidderen as ons daar kom.”
“Maar ons kan nie net hier sit en niks doen nie!” sê Sophie opgewonde. “Hoeveel seuns en meisies gaan hulle vannag eet?”
“Hompe-klompe,” antwoord die GSR. “Die Homp
vleisvreter het baie sterk aptyter.”
“Sal hy die kinders sommer uit hulle beddens gryp terwyl hulle nog slaap?” vra Sophie bekommerd.
“Soos ertjies uit prop,” bevestig die GSR. “Ek word naar as ek net daaraan dink!”
“Moet dan nie dink,” raai die GSR haar aan. “Ek sit honderd jare al op rots en voel elke nag so vergietig oor mensdommes wat reuse opgopsel. Maar ek moet vir fief neem. Daar niks wat ek kan maak. As ek nie so ammer-jammerlike reus van net agt meter, ek perbéér keer. Maar dit geheel buite die venster.”
“Sê hulle altyd waarheen hulle gaan?” wil Sophie
weet.
“Altyd,” antwoord die GSR. “Elke nag skree hulle as hulle trap loop. Ander aand skree hulle: ‘Ons gaan miesies Sippie en mies Soorie albei opgopsel!’”
“Dis walglik,” sê Sophie en gril. “Ek háát hulle.”
Sy en die GSR sit langs mekaar op die blou rots terwyl dit donkerder word. Sy het nog nooit so hulpeloos en mismoedig gevoel nie. Ná ’n rukkie staan sy op en sê: “Ek kan dit nie verdúúr nie. Dink net aan al daardie
;irme seuns en meisies wat binne die volgende paar uur opgeëet gaan word. Ons kan nie net hier sit nie. Ons inoet iets doen. Ons moet hulle agternasit!”
“Nee,” sê die GSR beslis.
“Ons moet!” sê Sophie driftig. “Hoekom wil jy nie gaan nie?”
Die GSR sug en skud sy kop. “Ek het jou al sewe,
ses male gesê, en hierdie die derde en eerste: Ek wys my nie vir mensdommes. Dit deflenetief.”
“Waarom nie? Is jy dan bang?”
“Hul sal my sien en sit in dierklasie-tuin met perd-kamele en lui jagperde.”

"Onsin," sê Sophie.
"En hulle jou na weeshuis stuur," vervolg die GSR. "Mensdommes, veral grotes, nie baie geroemd vir vriendelikheid. Hulle almal skuffelvoeters en gronkelgrawers."
"Dis glad nie waar nie," sê Sophie heftig. "Baie van
hulle is baie vriendelik en baie gaaf."
"Mf!" sê die GSR. "Onmoeilik te glo. Gee naam van een."
Nou moet Sophie vinnig dink. "Die Koningin van
Engeland," sê sy. "Jy kan haar nie 'n skuffelvoeter of 'n gronkelgrawer noem nie!"
"Wei . . sê die GSR.
"Of 'n jas-asser of 'n dom-esel nie!" Sophie raak al hoe kwater.
Die GSR kyk na haar en glimlag. "Ek jou geheimrig
klikker. Hompvleisvreter baie lustigheid haar op te gop-sel."
"Wat?! Die Koningin?" vra die geskokte Sophie.
"Ja," antwoord die GSR. "Hompvleisvreter sê hy ken nie proesel van koningin, en hy dink dit miskien uitergewoon smeklekkersmakerig. "
"Hoe durf hy eens daaraan dink!" sê Sophie.
"Maar Hompvleisvreter sê daar staan so baie dolsate by Koningin se paleis dat sy plan nooit sal skraag."
"Hy moet liewer nie eens probeer nie!"
"Hompvleisvreter sê hy wil ook dolsaat proesel, maar hy bang die groot, swart harige hoede wat hulle op kopstuk sit. Hy dink dit kielie miskien keelgat."
"Ek wens hy stik!" sê Sophie.
"Hompvleisvreter baie besigtige gopselaar," sê die
GSR.
Sophie is 'n oomblikkie stil. Sy dink diep. Dan roep sy opgewonde uit: "Koekemakranka! Ek het dit!"
"Het wat?" vra die GSR.
"Die antwoord," sê Sophie. "Ons sal self na die Ko ningin gaan. Dis 'n wonderlike idee! Ek sal na haar gaan en haar vertel van al die aaklige mensvreter-reuse en ek is seker sy sal weet hoe om hulle te keer."
Die GSR skud weemoedig sy kop. "Sy sal jou nooit as te emmer glo. Nooit in der vlerigheid. Nooit as te ooit."
"Ek dink sy sal."
"Nooit," sê die GSR beslis. "Dit sal klinkel na baie links storie en die Koningin sal lag en sê: 'Wat 'n slomp snertseltjies!'"
"Sy sal nie!"
"Natuurlik sal sy," sê die GSR. "Ek sê jou al voor en door mensdommes gló nie van reuse."
"Dan moet ons 'n manier vind om haar te láát glo,"
sê Sophie.
"En hoe dink jy gaan jy die Koningin met jou oogkykers vang?"

"Wa-wag net so 'n bietjie," sê Sophie. "Ek het 'n be-ier plan."
"Jou idees en planne vol frommelrigheid," brom die
GSR.
"Nie hierdie een nie," verseker Sophie hom. "Jy sê dat as ons die Koningin van die reuse vertel, sy ons nie sal glo nie, në?"
"Sy dit nooit glo," antwoord die GSR.
"Maar ons gaan haar nie vertel nie," sê Sophie opgewonde. "Ons hoef haar dit nie te vertel nie. Ons sal haar dit laat dróóm!"
"Dié idee nog frommelriger as ander," sê die GSR
minagtend. "Drome baie soeterig maar mensdommes gló nie drome! Mensdommes glo droom bewyl hy droom. So gou hy wakker word, sê hy: 'Dankie tog dit net droom.'"
"Moet jou nie daaroor bekommer nie," kom dit van
Sophie. "Ek sal dit regkry."
"Nooit as te emmer!" sê die GSR.
"Ek sal. Sowaar ek sal. Maar jy sal my moet help. Sê my eers: Kan jy regtigwaar enigiemand enigiets laat droom?"
"Regs!" sê die GSR. "Enige droom vir enige mens
domme."
"As ek sê ek wil droom dat ek in 'n bad met silwer vlerke deur die lug vlieg, sal jy my dit kan laat droom?"
"Ek kan."
"Maar hoe?" vra Sophie. "Jy kan mos nie altyd presies so 'n droom in een fles he nie."
"Nee, nie in een fles," antwoord die GSR, "maar ek
kan droom máák."
"Hoe maak jy hom?" vra Sophie.
"Ek maak hom soos jy koek maak," antwoord hy. "As jy regte hoeveelte van verskillende goeters onder—
mekaargooi, kry jy spesinjale soort koek. Suikerig, sponselig, kersfeserig, krenterig of vrotterig. Net so met drome."
"Vertel nog!" sê Sophie. Sy raak al hoe meer opgewonde.
"Ek billiejoene drome op rakke. Regs of links?"
"Reg," sê Sophie.
"Ek het drome van baddens, baie. Ek het drome van vlieg. Ek het drome van silwer vlerke, baie. Nou men-gel ek drome ondermekaar en gouer as netnou maak ek droom waar jy vlieg in bad met silwer vlerke."
"Ek verstaan," sê Sophie, "maar ek het regtig nie ge-weet jy kán drome meng nie."
"Drome liefie om te mengel," sê die GSR. "Hulle eensaam alleen in fles."
"Dis wonderlik!" sê Sophie. "Nou goed. Het jy enige drome van die Koningin van Engeland?"

“Baie,” antwoord die GSR.
“En van reuse?” “Natuurlik.”
“En van reuse wat mense eet?” “Flesse vol,” sê die GSR.
“En van sulke dogtertjies soos ek?”
“Honderde,” antwoord die GSR. “Flesse en flesse van meisiekies soos jy.”
“Sal jy ’n droom meng presiés soos ek dit wil hê?” “Ja,” antwoord die GSR, “maar dit nie help. Ek gedagtig jy dinge aan ander stert beet.”
“Luister mooi,” hou Sophie vol, “luister mooi wat ek wil hê. Jy moet ’n droom meng wat jy in die Koningin se kamer gaan blaas terwyl sy slaap.”
“Wag ’n blikoom!” sê die GSR. “Hoe gaan ek naby kom lat ek droom in kamer blaas? Jy praat nou soos kolhaas.”
“Ek sal jou later sê,” sê Sophie. “Luister net baie goed. Hier is die droom wat ek wil hê. Lúister jy?”
“Baie goed,” antwoord die GSR. “My ore geslits.” Sophie praat stadig en duidelik. “Ek wil hê,” begin
sy, “die Koningin moet droom dat nege aaklige sewentien meter lange reuse vannag na Engeland gesluip het. Sy moet hulle name ook droom. Wat is hulle name nou weer?”
“Hompvleisvreter,” sê die GSR, “Beenknerser, Manneklemmer, Kindkouer, Sousdrupper, Afvalvreter en
Vroueklouer, Bloedslurper en Jagterslagter.”
“Laat haar al daardie name droom,” sê Sophie, “en laat haar droom dat hulle Engeland in die middel van die toweruur binneval en seuns en meisies uit hulle beddens gryp en dan … ”
Sophie bly skielik stil.
Toe vra sy: “Eet hulle die kinders sommer op die plek op of dra hulle hulle eers weg?”
“Gewoontelik stopper hulle kidderen klappens in bek
soos springmielies,” sê hy.
“Sit dit ook in die droom,” beveel Sophie. Sy dink ’n bietjie. “En dan … dan … dan moet die droom sê dat as hulle dik geëet is, hulle weer na Reuseland terug-keer waar niemand hulle ooit sal vind nie.”
“Dit al?” vra die GSR.
“Natuurlik nie,” sê Sophie. “In die droom moet jy ook verduidelik dat daar ’n Groot Sagmoedige Reus is wat vir haar sal wys waar die gedrogte woon sodat haar soldate hulle eens en vir altyd kan vang. En dan moet jy haar nog een belangrike ding laat droom. Sy moet droom dat daar ’n klein dogtertjie met die naam van Sophie op haar vensterbank sit. Dié Sophie sal haar kan sê waar die Groot Sagmoedige Reus is.”
“Waar hy?” vra die GSR.
“Ons kom later daarby,” sê Sophie. “Nou ja, die Koningin droom die

droom - reg?”
“Regs,” sê die GSR.
“Dan word sy wakker en die eerste ding wat sy dink is: O, wat ’n aaklige droom! Dan kyk sy na die venster en wat sien sy?”
“Wat sien sy?” vra die GSR.
“Sy sien ’n dogtertjie met die naam van Sophie op die vensterbank sit - daar, reg voor haar oë!”
“Hoe kom jy daar?”
“Jy gaan my daar sit,” sê Sophie kalm. “Dis juis die wonderlikste deel van die plan. As iemand dróóm dat daar ’n dogtertjie op haar vensterbank sit en sy word wakker en sién dat daar regtig ’n dogtertjie sit, dan het die droom mos waar geword, of hoe?”
“Ek sien nou hoese kant jy koes,” sê die GSR. “As die Koningin jou daar sien, glo sy hele droom.”
“Net so,” sê Sophie, “maar dis nie juis belangrik dat
sy alles moet glo nie, want ek sal haar kan oortuig dat die storie waar is.”
“Jy sê sy moet droom van Groot Sagmoedige Reus wat met Koningin praat.”
“Ja, en jy moet met haar praat. Jy is al een wat vir haar sal kan wys waar Reuseland is.”
“Hoe gaan ek Koningin vermoet? Dolsate gouer as eergister skieter.”
“Die soldate staan net vóór die paleis,” sê Sophie. “Agter is daar ’n baie groot tuin waar geen soldate is nie. ’n Baie hoë muur met penne bo-op hou mense uit. Maar jy sal sommer bo-oor kan trap.”
“Hoe weet jy van paleis?” vra die GSR.
“Tot verlede jaar was ek in ’n ander weeshuis,” verduidelik Sophie. “Dit was in Londen en ons het dikwels daar gaan stap.”
“Sal jy kan aankrui waar paleis is? Ek dit nooit as te emmer kry as ek moet help-my-soek in Londen!”
“Ek sal jou die pad wys,” verseker Sophie hom. “Ek bietjie verskrik vir Londen,” erken die GSR. “Moenie bang wees nie,” troos Sophie. “Daar is baie
donker straatjies, en buitendien is daar min mense op straat gedurende die toweruur.”
Die GSR tel Sophie met twee vingers van sy een hand op en plaas haar saggies op die palm van die ander. “Die Koningin se paleis baie groot?” vra hy.
“Yslik groot!” sê Sophie.
“Hoe ons regte kamer kry?”
“Dis jou werk daardie,” lag Sophie. “Waarvoor het jy dan sulke wonderlike ore?”
“En Koningin my nie in dierklasie-tuin met leeu—
struise besluit?”

“Natuurlik sal sy nie,” sê Sophie. “Jy sal ’n held wees. En nog iets, jy sal nooit weer snorkommers hoef te eet nie!”
“Nooit as te emmer weer snorkommers?”
“Jy sal nie een kan kry nie, al wil jy dit hê,” lag sy. “By ons plant die mense nie sulke nare goed nie!”
Dit beklink die saak. Die GSR staan op. “Wanneer moet ek drome mengel?” vra hy.
“Nou dadelik,” sê Sophie. “Wanneer sien ons Koningin?”
“Vannag,” antwoord Sophie. “Sodra jy die droom
klaar gemeng het.”
“Vannag?” vra die GSR. “Hoekom jy so holderbolder jaagtig?”
“As ons nie vannag die kinders kan red nie, kan ons
ten minste keer dat die reuse more-aand nog kinders vang. Buitendien is ek rasend honger. Ek het vier-en- twintig uur laas geëet - moet dit nie vergeet nie!”
“Dan moet ons opskuf!” sê die GSR en stryk aan grot toe.
Sophie soen hom op die tippie van sy duim. “Ek het geweet jy sal dit doen,” sê sy. “Maar nou moet ons op-skud!”

16. MIXING THE DREAM

It was dark now. The night had already begun. The BFG, with Sophie sitting on his hand, hurried into the cave and put on those brilliant blinding lights that seemed to come from nowhere. He placed Sophie on the table. 'Stay there please,' he said, 'and no chittering. I is needing to listen only to silence when I is mixing up such a knotty plexicated dream as this.'

He hurried away from her. He got out an enormous empty glass jar that was the size of a washing machine. He clutched it to his chest and hurried towards the shelves on which stood the thousands and thousands of smaller jars containing the captured dreams.

'Dreams about giants,' he muttered to himself as he searched the labels. 'The giants is guzzling human beans … no, not that one … nor that one … here's one! … And here's another! …' He grabbed the jars and unscrewed the tops. He tipped the dreams into the enormous jar he was clutching and as each one went in, Sophie caught a glimpse of a small sea-green blob tumbling from one jar into the other.

The BFG hurried towards another shelf. 'Now,' he muttered, 'I is wanting dreams about gigglehouses for girls … and about boggleboxes for boys.' He was becoming very tense now. Sophie could almost see the excitement bubbling inside him as he scurried back and forth among his beloved jars. There must have
been fifty thousand dreams altogether up there on the shelves, but he seemed to know almost exactly where every one of them was. 'Dreams about a little girl,' he muttered. 'And dreams about me … about the BFG … come on, come on, hurry up, get on with it … now where in the wonky world is I keeping those? …'

And so it went on. In about half an hour the BFG had found all the dreams he wanted and had tipped them into the one huge jar. He put the jar on the table. Sophie sat watching him but said nothing. Inside the big jar, lying on the bottom of it, she could clearly see about fifty of those oval sea-green jellyish shapes, all pulsing gently in and out, some lying on top of others, but each one still a quite separate individual dream.

'Now we is mixing them,' the BFG announced. He went to the cupboard where he kept his bottles of frobscottle, and from it he took out a gigantic egg-beater. It was one of those that has a handle which you turn, and down below there are a lot of overlapping blades that go whizzing round. He inserted the bottom end of this contraption into the big jar where the dreams were lying. 'Watch,' he said. He started turning the handle very fast.

Flashes of green and blue exploded inside the jar. The dreams were being whisked into a sea-green froth.
'The poor things!' Sophie cried.
'They is not feeling it,' the BFG said as he turned the handle. 'Dreams is not like human beans or animals. They has no brains. They is made of zozimus.'
After about a minute, the BFG stopped whisking. The whole bottle was now full to the brim with large bubbles. They were almost exactly like the bubbles we ourselves blow from soapy water, except that these had even brighter and more beautiful colours swimming on their surfaces.
'Keep watching,' the BFG said.
Quite slowly, the topmost bubble rose up through the neck of the jar and floated away. A second one followed. Then a third and a fourth. Soon the cave was filled with hundreds of beautifully coloured bubbles, all drifting gently through the air. It was truly a wonderful sight. As Sophie watched them, they all started floating towards the cave entrance, which was still open.
'They're going out,' Sophie whispered.
'Of course,' the BFG said.
'Where to?'
'Those is all little tiny dream-bits that I isn't using,' the BFG said. 'They is going back to the misty country to join up with proper dreams.'
'It's all a bit beyond me,' Sophie said.
'Dreams is full of mystery and magic,' the BFG said. 'Do not try to understand them. Look in the big bottle and you will now see the dream you is wanting for the Queen.'
Sophie turned and stared into the great jar. On the bottom of it, something was thrashing around wildly, bouncing up and down and flinging itself against the walls of the jar. 'Good heavens!' she cried. 'Is that it?'
'That's it,' the BFG said proudly.
'But it's … it's horrible!' Sophie cried. 'It's jumping about! It wants to get out!'
'That's because it's a trogglehumper,' the BFG said. 'It's a nightmare.'
'Oh, but I don't want you to give the Queen a nightmare!' Sophie cried.
'If she is dreaming about giants guzzling up little boys and girls, then what is you expecting it to be except a nightmare?' the BFG said.
'Oh, no!' Sophie cried.
'Oh, yes,' the BFG said. 'A dream where you is seeing little chiddlers being eaten is about the most frightsome trogglehumping dream you can get. It's a kicksy bogthumper. It's a whoppsy grobswitcher. It is all

of them riddled into one. It is as bad as that dream I blew into the Fleshlumpeater this afternoon. It is worse.'

Sophie stared down at the fearful nightmare dream that was still thrashing away in the huge glass jar. It was much larger than the others. It was about the size and shape of, shall we say, a turkey's egg. It was jellyish. It had tinges of bright scarlet deep inside it. There was something terrible about the way it was throwing itself against the sides of the jar.

'I don't want to give the Queen a nightmare,' Sophie said.

'I is thinking,' the BFG said, 'that your Queen will be happy to have a nightmare if having a nightmare is going to save a lot of human beans from being gobbled up by filthsome giants. Is I right or is I left?'

'I suppose you're right,' Sophie said. 'It's got to be done.'

'She will soon be getting over it,' the BFG said.

'Have you put all the other important things into it?' Sophie asked.

'When I is blowing that dream into the Queen's bedroom,' the BFG said, 'she will be dreaming every single little thingalingaling you is asking me to make her dream.'

'About me sitting on the window-sill?'

'That part is very strong.'

'And about a Big Friendly Giant?'

'I is putting in a nice long gobbit about him,' the BFG said. As he spoke, he picked up one of his smaller jars and very quickly tipped the struggling thrashing trogglehumper out of the large jar into the small one. Then he screwed the lid tightly on to the small jar.

'That's it,' he announced. 'We is now ready.' He fetched his suitcase and put the small jar into it.

'Why bother to take a great big suitcase when you've only got one jar?' Sophie said. 'You could put the jar in your pocket.'

The BFG looked down at her and smiled. 'By goggles,' he said, taking the jar out of the suitcase, 'your head is not quite so full of grimesludge after all! I can see you is not born last week.'

'Thank you, kind sir,' Sophie said, making a little curtsey from the table-top.

'Is you ready to leave?' the BFG asked.

'I'm ready!' Sophie cried. Her heart was beginning to thump at the thought of what they were about to do. It really was a wild and crazy thing. Perhaps they would both be thrown into prison.

The BFG was putting on his great black cloak.

He tucked the jar into a pocket in his cloak. He picked up his long trumpet-like dream-blower. Then he turned and looked at Sophie who was still on the table-top. 'The dream-bottle is in my pocket,' he said. 'Is you going to sit in there with it during the travel?'

'Never!' cried Sophie. 'I refuse to sit next to that beastly thing!'

'Then where is you going to sit?' the BFG asked her.
Sophie looked him over for a few moments. Then she said, 'If you would be kind enough to swivel one of your lovely big ears so that it is lying flat like a dish, that would make a very cosy place for me to sit.'
'By gumbo, that is a squackling good idea!' the BFG said.
Slowly, he swivelled his huge right ear until it was like a great shell facing the heavens. He lifted Sophie up and placed her into it. The ear itself, which was about the size of a large tea-tray, was full of the same channels and crinkles as a human ear. It was extremely comfortable.
'I hope I don't fall down your earhole,' Sophie said, edging away from the large hole just beside her.
'Be very careful not to do that,' the BFG said. 'You would be giving me a cronking earache.'
The nice thing about being there was that she could whisper directly into his ear.
'You is tickling me a bit,' the BFG said. 'Please do not jiggle about.'
'I'll try not to,' Sophie said. 'Are we ready?'
'Oweeee!' yelled the BFG. 'Don't do that!'
'I didn't do anything,' Sophie said.
'You is talking too loud! You is forgetting that I is hearing every little thingalingaling fifty times louder than usual and there you is shouting away right inside my ear!'
'Oh gosh,' Sophie murmured. 'I forgot that.'
'Your voice is sounding like tunder and thrumpets!'
'I'm so sorry,' Sophie whispered. 'Is that better?'
'No!' cried the BFG. 'It sounds as though you is shootling off a bunderbluss!'
'Then how can I talk to you?' Sophie whispered.
'Don't!' cried the poor BFG. 'Please don't! Each word is like you is dropping buzzbombs in my earhole!'
Sophie tried speaking right under her breath. 'Is this better?' she said. She spoke so softly she couldn't even hear her own voice.
'That's better,' the BFG said. 'Now I is hearing you very nicely. What is it you is trying to say to me just now?'
'I was saying are we ready?'
'We is off!' cried the BFG, heading for the cave entrance. 'We is off to meet Her Majester the Queen!'
Outside the cave, he rolled the large round stone back into place and set off at a tremendous gallop.

16. Die aanmaak van die droom

Dit is reeds donker.
Die Groot Sagmoedige Reus, met Sophie op sy hand, haas hom na binne en slaan die verblindende lig aan wat van wie-weet-waar kom. Hy sit Sophie op die tafel neer. "Bly net hier en niks brabbel, hoor! Ek moet nou eksie-perfleksie luister as ek so 'n knoperige gesomli-keerde droom moet mengel."
Hy beweeg vinnig. Hy tel 'n enorme fles - die grootte van 'n wasmasjien - op en dra dit na die rakke waar die duisende drome in hulle afsonderlike flesse staan.
"Drome oor reuse … " mompel hy terwyl hy hulle
deurkyk. "Reuse gopsel mensdommes … h'm-h'm … nie darie een … ook nie hierie … hier goeie een … hier nog een … " Hy gryp die verskillende flesse, skroef die deksels af en gooi die drome in die groot mengfles. Soos die drome die een na die ander inglip, kry Sophie 'n glimpie van klein seegroen borreltjies wat van die een fles na die ander beweeg.
Die GSR draf na 'n ander rak. "Nou," mompel hy,
"drome van giggelhuise vir meisiekies en bromhuise vir seuns …" Hy raak al hoe meer gespanne. Sophie kan behoorlik sien hoe die opwinding in hom oplaai soos hy heen en weer tussen sy geliefde flesse jaag. Daar is se-ker vyftigduisend drome op die rakke, maar hy weet presies waar elkeen is. "Drome van klein meisiekie
…" sê hy saggies, "… en drome van ekke … van die
Groot Sagmoedige Reus … kom nou, kom nou, waar, o gannatjie, waar bêre ek húlle?"
En so gaan dit aan. Ná omtrent 'n halfuur het die GSR al die drome wat hy gesoek het, gekry en in die groot fles oorgeplaas. Sophie hou alles fyn dop, maar sê nie 'n woord nie. Binne-in die fles sien sy sowat vyftig van daardie seegroen jellie-agtige vorms saggies, saggies pols - party lê bo-op die ander, maar elkeen is nog 'n afsonderlike droom.
"Nou moet ons hulle mengel," verduidelik die GSR. Hy gaan na die kas waar hy sy bobbelbrou bêre en haal
'n tamaai groot klitser daaruit. Dis nog van dié soort klitsers wat 'n handvatsel het wat mens moet draai, en baie lemme wat oormekaar vou om die beslag te klits. Hy sit die klitser in die groot mengfles waarin al die drome nou lê. "Kyk nou goed," sê hy en draai die
handvatsel so vinnig soos hy kan. "Die arme goed!" sê Sophie.
"Hulle nie voel," sê die GSR, wat nog steeds die
handvatsel draai. "Drome nie soos mensdommes of dierklasies. Hulle nie verstandigheid of hardsing in kop-stukke. Hulle gemaak van

soesie-tjoesies.”
Ná ’n minuut of wat hou hy op met klits. In die fles
is daar nou net groot borrels. Hulle lyk na die seepbelle wat kinders soms blaas - hulle is net baie mooier en baie helderder van kleur.
“Kyk nou mooi,” sê die GSR.
Baie stadig styg die boonste borrel deur die bek van die fles en dry we weg. ’n Tweede een volg. Dan ’n derde en ’n vierde. Binne oomblikke drywe honderde pragtig gekleurde borrels stadig na die bek van die grot.
“Hulle gaan uit!” fluister Sophie.
“Natuurlik gaan hulle uit!” antwoord die GSR. “Waarheen?”
“Dit al die klein stukkies wat ek nie gebruik,” verduidelik die GSR. “Hulle gaan weer na wolke en maak ander drome.”
“Ek verstaan nie so mooi nie,” sê Sophie saggies.
“Drome baie geheimrige goeters vol towerowering,” sê die GSR. “Moenie perbeer bestaan. Kyk in fles jou droom vir Koningin. Die droom wat jy verstel het.”
Sophie draai om en kyk na die groot fles. Onder op die bodem lê iets wat met geweld beur om uit te kom. Dit ruk rond en stamp teen die kante van die fles. “Aarde!” sê sy, “Is dit die droom?”
“Dit die droom,” antwoord die GSR trots.
“Maar dis ’n aaklige droom! Kyk hoe spring hy rond.”
“Dit troggelstamper,” lag die GSR, “daarom hy kwaaierig.”
“Maar ek wil nie he die Koningin moet ’n nagmerrie kry nie!” roep Sophie ontsteld uit.
“As jy droom reuse gopsel kidderen op, kry jy troggel
stamper.”
“Agge nee!” kerm Sophie.
“Agge ja,” koggel die GSR. Dan word hy ernstig. “As jy droom reuse gopsel kidderen op, kry jy sterkste troggelstamper van almal. Dit skopperjol. Dit grobbeldraaier. Dit net so woesterny soos troggelstamper van Hompvleisvreter. ’ Sophie staar na die gruwelike nagmerrie wat nog steeds woes rondwoel in die fles. Dis baie groter as die ander drome. Dis ovaal en omtrent so groot soos ’n kal-koeneier. Dis jellierig met strepe helderrooi diep binne-in. En die manier waarop hy hom nou teen die kante van die fles smyt, is te vreeslik.
“Maar ek wil nie hê die Koningin moet so ’n nare droom kry nie!”
“Ek dink jou Koningin liefie om troggelstamper te
kry as sy honderde kidderen red van reuse. Regs of links?”
“Jy’s seker reg,” sê Sophie. “Dit moet gedoen
word.”
“Sy sal gou gesondheid hê daarvan!” troos die GSR
haar.
“Het jy ál die ander belangrike dinge bygevoeg?” vra

Sophie bekommerd.
“As ek droom in Koningin se kamer blaas, droom sy elke piepelklein ding wat jy vra.”
“Ook dat ek op die vensterbank sit?” “Darie deel bedonderlik sterk.”
“En van die Groot Sagmoedige Reus?”
“Ja, ek het smeklekker storie van hóm gestel.” Ter wyl hy praat, tel hy een van die kleiner flesse op en gooi die struwelende, bakleiende troggelstamper wat hy so pas aangemaak het, daarin. Toe skroef hy die deksel baie styf vas.
“So ja,” sê hy “nou ons aarbei klaar.” Hy tel die kof
fer op en sit die klein fles binne-in.
“Hoekom neem jy die groot koffer saam as jy net die een klein flessie het?” vra Sophie.
“Jorreldons!” Die GSR kyk met ’n glimlag na haar.
“Jou kopstuk nie so vol voëleiers soos ek dink,” sê hy en haal die fles uit die koffer. “Ek sien jy nie oormóre gebore!”
“Dankie, meneer, vir die mooi kompliment!” sê So
phie en maak ’n kniebuiging op die tafel.
“Jy reg, dan ons weg,” kondig die GSR aan.
“Ek is reg,” sê Sophie. Haar hart klop wild as sy net dink aan alles wat hulle nou gaan aanvang. Dit klink vir haar ineens soos ’n verspotte droom. Dalk beland hulle albei nog in die tronk!
Die GSR gooi sy groot swart mantel oor sy skouers.
Hy steek die fles diep in sy onderbaadjiesak. Hy tel die droomblaas-trompet op. Toe draai hy om na Sophie wat nog steeds op die tafel sit.
“Droomfles nou in sak,” sê hy. “Gaan jy saam met fles wegkruiper?”
“Nog nooit nie!” sê sy verontwaardig. “Ek weier om langs ’n troggelstamper te sit.”
“Waar sit jy dan?”
Sophie kyk met ’n kennersoog na hom en sê: “As jy vriendelik genoeg sal wees om een van jou pragtige ore bak te maak, sal dit ’n knus sitplek wees.”
“Gommelastiek!” sê die GSR. “Dit ’n blinkende goe-terige idee.” Hy draai sy enorme regteroor totdat dit soos ’n skulp lyk - ’n skulp wat boontoe oop is.
Hy tel Sophie versigtig op en sit haar binne-in. Die
oor, wat omtrent so groot soos ’n skinkbord is, is vol
kreukels en draaie - nes ’n mensoor. Dis ’n besonder
ˆemaklike sitplek, kom Sophie agter.
“Ek hoop net nie ek val in jou oorgat nie.” spot sy terwyl sy effens van die gevaar af wegskuif. “Vernuftig dat jy dit nie doen!” waarsku die GSR. “Ek sal kreunende oorpyn kry.”
Die heel lekkerste lekker van die sitplek is dat Sophie nou direk in sy oor kan fluister.

“Jy kielie my bietjie,” sê die GSR. “Asseblief nie so opwurm.”
“Ek sal my bes doen,” sê Sophie vrolik. “Is ons reg
om te vertrek?”
“Einááá!” skree die GSR.
“Ek het niks gedoen nie!” sê Sophie onthuts.
“Jy brabbel hard! Jy vergeet ek hoor elke tingeling-ring vyftig keer en jy skree nou in oor.”
“Genade!” murmel Sophie. “Ek hét skoon vergeet.” “Jou stem klink soos tonder en strompetter.”
“Ek is jammer.” fluister Sophie. “Is dit beter?”
“Nee,” skree die GSR. “Dit klink soos geskieter met verweer!”
“Hoe kan ek dan met jou praat?” fluister-vra sy.
“Moenie!” smeek die GSR. “Asseblief, moenie! Elke woord klink soos brommelbom wat in oor val.”
Sophie praat nou so sag dat sy haarself glad nie kan hoor nie. “Is dit beter?”
“Beterder, ja,” sê die GSR. “Nou hoor ek beterder.
Wat het jy nou net gesê?”
“Ek het gevra of ons reg is.”
“Ons op straat!” skree die GSR en mik na die bek van die grot. “Ons nou op straat na Haar Majestator, die Koningin van Engeland!”
Toe hy buite is, rol hy die groot rots weer in posisie
en spring teen ’n geweldige spoed weg.

17. JOURNEY TO LONDON

The great yellow wasteland lay dim and milky in the moonlight as the Big Friendly Giant went galloping across it.

Sophie, still wearing only her nightie, was reclining comfortably in a crevice of the BFG's right ear. She was actually in the outer rim of the ear, near the top, where the edge of the ear folds over, and this folding-over bit made a sort of roof for her and gave her wonderful protection against the rushing wind. What is more, she was lying on skin that was soft and warm and almost velvety. Nobody, she told herself, had ever travelled in greater comfort.

Sophie peeped over the rim of the ear and watched the desolate landscape of Giant Country go whizzing by. They were certainly moving fast. The BFG went bouncing off the ground as though there were rockets in his toes and each stride he took lifted him about a hundred feet into the air. But he had not yet gone into that whizzing top gear of his, when the ground became blurred by speed and the wind howled and his feet didn't seem to be touching anything but air. That would come later.

Sophie had not slept for a long time. She was very tired. She was also warm and comfortable. She dozed off.

She didn't know how long she slept, but when she woke up again and looked out over the edge of the ear, the landscape had changed completely. They were in a green country now, with mountains and forests. It was still dark but the moon was shining as brightly as ever.

Suddenly and without slowing his pace, the BFG turned his head sharply to the left. For the first time during the entire journey he spoke a few words. 'Look quick-quick over there,' he said, pointing his long trumpet.

Sophie looked in the direction he was pointing. Through the murky darkness all she saw at first was a great cloud of dust about three hundred yards away.

'Those is the other giants all galloping back home after their guzzle,' the BFG said.

Then Sophie saw them. In the light of the moon, she saw all nine of those monstrous half-naked brutes thundering across the landscape together. They were galloping in a pack, their necks craned forward, their arms bent at the elbows, and worst of all, their stomachs bulging. The strides they took were
incredible. Their speed was unbelievable. Their feet pounded and thundered on the ground and left a great sheet of dust behind them. But in ten seconds they were gone.

'A lot of little girlsies and boysies is no longer sleeping in their beds tonight,' the BFG said.

Sophie felt quite ill.

But this grim encounter made her more than ever determined to go through with her mission.

It must have been about an hour or so later that the BFG began to slow his pace. 'We is in England now,' he said suddenly.

Dark though it was, Sophie could see that they were in a country of green fields with neat hedges in between the fields. There were hills with trees all over them and occasionally there were roads with the lights of cars moving along. Each time they came to a road, the BFG was over it and away, and no motorist could possibly have seen anything except a quick black shadow flashing overhead.

All at once, a curious orange-coloured glow appeared in the night sky ahead of them.

'We is coming close to London,' the BFG said.

He slowed to a trot. He began looking about cautiously.

Groups of houses were now appearing on all sides. But there were still no lights in their windows. It was too early for anyone to be getting up yet.

'Someone's bound to see us,' Sophie said.

'Never is they seeing me,' the BFG said confidently. 'You is forgetting that I is doing this sort of thing for years and years and years. No human bean is ever catching even the smallest wink of me.'

'I did,' Sophie whispered.

'Ah,' he said. 'Yes. But you was the very first.'

During the next half-hour, things moved so swiftly and so silently that Sophie, crouching in the giant's ear, was unable to understand exactly what was going on. They were in streets. There were houses everywhere. Sometimes there were shops. There were bright lamps in the streets. There were quite a few people about and there were cars with lights on. But nobody ever noticed the BFG. It was impossible to understand quite how he did it. There was a kind of magic in his movements. He seemed to melt into the shadows. He would glide — that was the only word to describe his way of moving — he would glide noiselessly from one dark place to another, always moving, always gliding forward through the streets of London, his black cloak blending with the shadows of the night.

It is quite possible that one or two late-night wanderers might have thought they saw a tall black shadow skimming swiftly down a murky sidestreet, but even if they had, they would never have believed their own eyes. They would have dismissed it as an illusion and blamed themselves for seeing things that weren't there.

Sophie and the BFG came at last to a large place full of trees. There

was a road running through it, and a lake. There were no people in this place and the BFG stopped for the first time since they had set out from his cave many hours before.

'What's the matter?' Sophie whispered in her under-the-breath voice.

'I is in a bit of a puddle,' he said.

'You're doing marvellously,' Sophie whispered.

'No, I isn't,' he said. 'I is now completely boggled. I is lost.'

'But why?'

'Because we is meant to be in the middle of London and suddenly we is in green pastures.'

'Don't be silly,' Sophie whispered. 'This is the middle of London. It's called Hyde Park. I know exactly where we are.'

'You is joking.'

'I'm not. I swear I'm not. We're almost there.'

'You mean we is nearly at the Queen's Palace?' cried the BFG.

'It's just across the road,' Sophie whispered. 'This is where I take over.'

'Which way?' the BFG asked.

'Straight ahead.'

The BFG trotted forward through the deserted park.

'Now stop.'

The BFG stopped.

'You see that huge roundabout ahead of us just outside the Park?' Sophie whispered.

'I see it.'

'That is Hyde Park Corner.'

Even now, when it was still an hour before dawn, there was quite a lot of traffic moving around Hyde Park Corner.

Then Sophie whispered, 'In the middle of the roundabout there is an enormous stone arch with a statue of a horse and rider on top of it. Can you see that?'

The BFG peered through the trees. 'I is seeing it,' he said.

'Do you think that if you took a very fast run at it, you could jump clear over Hyde Park Corner, over the arch and over the horse and rider and land on the pavement the other side?'

'Easy,' the BFG said.

'You're sure? You're absolutely sure?'

'I promise,' the BFG said.

'Whatever you do, you mustn't land in the middle of Hyde Park Corner.'

'Don't get so flussed,' the BFG said. 'To me that is a snitchy little jump. There's not a thingalingaling to it.'

'Then go!' Sophie whispered.

The BFG broke into a full gallop. He went scorching across the Park and just before he reached the railings that divided it from the street,

he took off. It was a gigantic leap. He flew high over Hyde Park Corner and landed as softly as a cat on the pavement the other side.
‘Well done!’ Sophie whispered. ‘Now quick! Over that wall!’
Directly in front of them, bordering the pavement, there was a brick wall with fearsome-looking spikes all along the top of it. A swift crouch, a little leap and the BFG was over it.
‘We’re there!’ Sophie whispered excitedly. ‘We’re in the Queen’s back garden!’

17. Die reis na Londen

Die groot geel vlakte lê wasig wit in die maanskyn.
Sophie, haar nagjurk om haar toegewikkel, lê heerlik gemaklik agteroor in die voue van die Groot Sagmoedige Reus se regteroor. Sy lê in die buitenste ronding van die oor waar die rand omkrul en ’n soort dak vorm wat haar redelik goed teen die wind beskerm. Daarby is die vel van die GSR se oor warm en sag - byna fluweel-agtig. Niemand, besluit sy, het ’n lekkerder lêplek as sy nie!
Sophie loer oor die rand van die oor en kyk hoe die verlate landskap van Reuseland onder hulle verbyflits. Hulle beweeg oneindig vinnig. Die GSR spring en wip oor die aarde asof daar vuurpyle in sy tone is, en elke tree wat hy neem, lig hom baie meters in die lug op. Maar hy is nog nie in daardie hoogste vlieënde versnelling wat die aarde laat verdof en die wind laat loei
lerwyl sy voete glad nie die aarde raak nie. Dit kom eers later.
Sophie het ’n baie lang ruk nie geslaap nie. Sy is ont—
settend moeg. Haar skuilplekkie is heerlik warm en gemaklik. Haar oë val toe en sy raak aan die slaap.
Hoe lank sy geslaap het, weet sy nie, maar toe sy
wakker word en oor die rand van die oor loer, het die landskap totaal verander. Hulle is nou in ’n welige groen landstreek met berge en bosse. Dis nog steeds nag, maar die maan skyn helder.
Skielik, en sonder om sy spoed te verminder, draai die GSR sy kop skerp na links. Vir die eerste keer ty—
dens die rit praat hy. “Blitsie-flitsie met jou oogkyker,”
sê hy en wys met sy lang trompet.
Sophie kyk waarheen hy wys. In die maanlig sien sy
’n donker, digte wolk so driehonderd meter van hulle af.
“Dit die ander reuse wat teruggalop na Reuseland,”
verduidelik hy. “Hulle nou propdik gevreet.”
Toe eers herken Sophie hulle. Daar dreun ál nege van die monsteragtige, halfkaal gedrogte verby. Hulle galop in gelid, nekke vorentoe gestrek, arms by die elm-boë gebuig en - ergste van alles - met mae wat wie weet waar staan. Die tree wat hulle neem, is skrikwek-kend lank. Die spoed waarteen hulle beweeg, is ongelooflik. Hulle voete trap en klap donderend op die aarde sodat groot stofwolke agter hulle opslaan. Binne tien sekondes is hulle buite sig.
“’n Klomp meisiekies en seuns slaap nie meer in hul
le bed,” merk die GSR op.
Sophie voel skoon naar op haar maag.
Hierdie aaklige gesig maak haar net meer vasberade om met die plan

voort te gaan.
So ’n uur of wat later verminder die GSR sy vaart.
“Ons nou in Engeland,” kondig hy aan.
Alhoewel dit nog donker is, herken Sophie die groen velde en netjiese heinings. Oral is heuwels met bome en heelwat paaie. Hier en daar jaag ’n motor verby. Elke keer as hulle naby ’n pad kom, spring die GSR hoog en vinnig daaroor sonder dat die motoris iets gewaar - in elk geval niks meer as net ’n donker skaduwee wat bo-oor sy kop trek nie.
Dan verskyn daar ’n eienaardige oranjekleurige gloed
in die naghemel voor hulle.
“Ons naby Londen,” sê die GSR.
Hy loop nou op ’n drafstap. Hy kyk versigtig rond.
Die groepies huise staan nou digter opmekaar, maar daar is nêrens lig in die vensters nie. Dis nog te vroeg vir iemand om wakker te wees.
Sophie begin senuweeagtig raak. “Iemand gaan ons
sowaar nog sien,” sê sy.
“Nooit as te emmer,” stel die GSR haar gerus. “Jy vergeet ek loop al stronkiejare lank in julle land rond.
(ioen mensdomme my nog met die kleinste knipoog ge-sien.”
“Ék het!” fluister Sophie.
“Ja,” erken hy, “maar onthou, jy net een!”
Die volgende halfuur gebeur dinge so vinnig dat Sophie, hurkend in die GSR se oor, nie altyd mooi weet wat aangaan nie. Hulle is in smal strate met huise aan weerskante. Soms sien sy winkels. Dan is daar hel-der verligte strate. Heelwat mense is reeds op pad werk toe in motors met kopligte aan, maar niemand merk die GSR op nie. Sy kan glad nie verstaan hoe hy dit regkry om so onsigbaar te wees nie. Dis asof hy met die skaduwees saamsmelt. Hy gly - dis die enigste woord wat cnigsins sy manier van beweeg kan beskryf - hy gly ge-ruisloos van die een donker plek na die ander, altyd aan die beweeg, altyd voorwaarts-glyend deur die strate van Londen, sodat sy swart mantel deel word van die nag.
Dis baie moontlik dat een of twee vroegoggend-wandelaars gemeen het dat hulle ’n donker skaduwee by
’n systraat sien afsnel, maar al het hulle gedink dis ’n reus, sou hulle dit nie geglo het nie. Hulle sou gedink het dis ’n drogbeeld en hulleself uitgelag het omdat hulle dinge sien wat nie eens bestáán nie.
Uiteindelik kom Sophie en die GSR by ’n groot oop
ruimte met baie bome. Daar loop ’n pad deur die park en daar is ’n groot dam. Geen sterfling is te bespeur nie, en die GSR rus nou vir die eerste keer sedert hulle vertrek, ’n hele paar ’uur gelede.
“Wat makeer?” vra Sophie in haar byna-sonder—
asemstem.

“Ek nou rêrig ondermekaar,” sê die GSR. “Maar dit gaan dan so goed!” sê Sophie. “Ja, maar ek bedwaal.”
“Hoekom sê jy so?”
“Want ons moet in Londen loop en skielik ons in groen weilande.”
“Moenie laf wees nie,” fluister Sophie, “dit is die middel van Londen. Ons is nou in Hyde Park. Ek weet presies waar ons is.”
“Jy grap met my!”
“Nee, ek is ernstig. Ek belowe dis waar ons is. Ons is nou presies waar ons moet wees.
”
“Bedoel jy ons naby die Koningin se paleis?”
“Dis net oorkant die straat,” fluister Sophie. “Hier-vandaan sal ek die pad wys.”
“Watter kant toe?” vra die GSR. “Reguit aan.”
Die GSR drafstap deur die verlate park. “Stop hier!” kom dit van Sophie.
Die GSR gaan staan.
“Sien jy daardie groot sirkel daar, net oorkant die park?”
“Ek sien dit.”
“Dis Hyde Park Corner.”
Selfs in die vroeë oggendure is daar heelwat verkeer wat om die sirkel beweeg.
Weer fluister Sophie: “In die middel van die sirkel is
daar ’n enorme klipboog met ’n standbeeld van ’n perd met ’n ruiter op sy rug. Sien jy dit?”
Die GSR loer deur die bome. “Ek sien dit,” ant
woord hy.
“Dink jy dat as jy baie vinnig hardloop, jy dwarsoor die sirkel en bo-oor die ruiterstandbeeld sal kan spring en op die oorkantse sypaadjie sal kan land?”
“Maklik,” sê die GSR.
“Is jy séker? Hééltemal seker?” “Heeltemal seker,” sê die GSR.
“Wat ook al gebeur, moet tog net nie in die middel
van die sirkel land nie!”
“Moenie jou verkommer,” sê die GSR. “Vir my dit sommer ’n piepelklein springkie. Daar niks, g’n tringe-lingeling daaraan!”
“Nou ja, goed,” sê Sophie. “Spring!”
Die GSR hardloop vinnig, vinniger en nog vinniger.
Hy skiet deur die park en toe hy by die relings kom wat die park van die straat skei, spring hy. Wat ’n enorme, fabelagtige sprong. Hy vlieg oor die sirkel, dwarsoor die standbeeld van die perd en ruiter, en land so saggies soos ’n kat op die oorkantse sypaadjie.
“Knap gedaan!” juig Sophie saggies. “Nou gou-gou.
Bo-oor daardie muur.”

Direk voor hulle is ’n baie hoë baksteenmuur met ’n versperring van penne bo-op. ’n Vinnige gehurk, ’n kort, hoë sprong en hulle is veilig bo-oor.

“Ons is hier,” sê Sophie saggies. “Ons is in die
Koningin se agtertuin.”

18. THE PALACE

'By gumdrops!' whispered the Big Friendly Giant. 'Is this really it?'

'There's the Palace,' Sophie whispered back.

Not more than a hundred yards away, through the tall trees in the garden, across the mown lawns and the tidy flower-beds, the massive shape of the Palace itself loomed through the darkness. It was made of whitish stone. The sheer size of it staggered the BFG.

'But this place is having a hundred bedrooms at least!' he said.

'Easily, I should think,' Sophie whispered.

'Then I is boggled,' the BFG said. 'How is I possibly finding the one where the Queen is sleeping?'

'Let's go a bit closer and have a look,' Sophie whispered.

The BFG glided forward among the trees. Suddenly he stopped dead. The great ear in which Sophie was sitting began to swivel round.

'Hey!' Sophie whispered. 'You're going to tip me out!'

'Ssshh!' the BFG whispered back. 'I is hearing something!' He stopped behind a clump of bushes. He waited. The ear was still swinging this way and that. Sophie had to hang on tight to the side of it to save herself from tumbling out. The BFG pointed through a gap in the bushes, and there, not more than fifty yards away, she saw a man padding softly across the lawn. He had a guard-dog with him on a leash.

The BFG stayed as still as a stone. So did Sophie. The man and the dog walked on and disappeared into the darkness.

'You was telling me they has no soldiers in the back garden,' the BFG whispered.

'He wasn't a soldier,' Sophie whispered. 'He was some sort of a watchman. We'll have to be careful.'

'I is not too worried,' the BFG said. 'These wacksey big ears of mine is picking up even the noise of a man breathing the other side of this garden.'

'How much longer before it begins to get light?' Sophie whispered.

'Very short,' the BFG said. 'We must go pell-mell for leather now!'

He glided forward through the vast garden, and once again Sophie noticed how he seemed to melt into the shadows wherever he went. His feet made no sound at all, even when he was walking on gravel.

Suddenly, they were right up close against the back wall of the great Palace. The BFG's head was level with the upper windows one flight up, and Sophie, sitting in his ear, had the same view. In all the windows on that floor the curtains seemed to be drawn. There were no lights showing anywhere. In the distance they could hear the

muted sound of traffic going round Hyde Park Corner.
The BFG stopped and put his other ear, the one Sophie wasn't sitting in, close to the first window.
'No,' he whispered.
'What are you listening for?' Sophie whispered back.
'For breathing,' the BFG whispered. 'I is able to tell if it is a man human bean or a lady by the breathing-voice. We has a man in there. Snortling a little bit, too.'
He glided on, flattening his tall, thin, black-cloaked body against the side of the building. He came to the next window. He listened.
'No,' he whispered.
He moved on.
'This room is empty,' he whispered.
He listened in at several more windows, but at each one he shook his head and moved on.
When he came to the window in the very centre of the Palace, he listened but did not move on. 'Ho-ho,' he whispered. 'We has a lady sleeping in there.'
Sophie felt a little quiver go running down her spine. 'But who?' she whispered back.
The BFG put a finger to his lips for silence. He reached up through the open window and parted the curtains ever so slightly.
The orange glow from the night-sky over London crept into the room and cast a glimmer of light on to its walls. It was a large room. A lovely room. A rich carpet. Gilded chairs. A dressing-table. A bed. And on the pillow of the bed lay the head of a sleeping woman.
Sophie suddenly found herself looking at a face she had seen on stamps and coins and in the newspapers all her life.
For a few seconds she was speechless.
'Is that her?' the BFG whispered.
'Yes,' Sophie whispered back.
The BFG wasted no time. First, and very carefully, he started to raise the lower half of the large window. The BFG was an expert on windows. He had opened thousands of them over the years to blow his dreams into children's bedrooms. Some windows got stuck. Some were wobbly. Some creaked. He was pleased to find that the Queen's window slid upward like silk. He pushed up the lower half as far as it would go so as to leave a place on the sill for Sophie to sit.
Next, he closed the crack in the curtains.
Then, with finger and thumb, he lifted Sophie out of his ear and placed her on the window-ledge with her legs dangling just inside the room, but behind the curtains.
'Now don't you go tip-toppling backwards,' the BFG whispered. 'You must always be holding on tight with both hands to the inside of the

window-sill.'
Sophie did as he said.
It was summertime in London and the night was not cold, but don't forget that Sophie was wearing only her thin nightie. She would have given anything for a dressing-gown, not just to keep her warm but to hide the whiteness of her nightie from watchful eyes in the garden below.
The BFG was taking the glass jar from the pocket of his cloak. He unscrewed the lid. Now, very cautiously, he poured the precious dream into the wide end of his trumpet. He steered the trumpet through the curtains, far into the room, aiming it at the place where he knew the bed to be. He took a deep breath. He puffed out his cheeks and pooff, he blew.
Now he was withdrawing the trumpet, sliding it out very very carefully, like a thermometer.
'Is you all right sitting there?' he whispered.
'Yes,' Sophie murmured. She was quite terrified, but determined not to show it. She looked down over her shoulder. The ground seemed miles away. It was a nasty drop.
'How long will the dream take to work?' Sophie whispered.
'Some takes an hour,' the BFG whispered back. 'Some is quicker. Some is slower still. But it is sure to find her in the end.'
Sophie said nothing.
'I is going off to wait in the garden,' the BFG whispered. 'When you is wanting me, just call out my name and I is coming very quick.'
'Will you hear me?' Sophie whispered.
'You is forgetting these,' the BFG whispered, smiling and pointing to his great ears.
'Goodbye,' Sophie whispered.
Suddenly, unexpectedly, the BFG leaned forward and kissed her gently on the cheek. Sophie felt like crying.
When she turned to look at him, he was already gone. He had simply melted away into the dark garden.

18. Die paleis

“Gommelastiek en tameletjie!” fluister die GSR. “Is ons régtig hier?”
“Daar is die paleis,” en Sophie wys met haar vinger.
Nie meer as honderd meter van hulle af nie, tussen die hoë borne in die tuin, anderkant die kort gesnyde gras met die netjiese blombeddings, doem die massiewe buitelyne van Buckingham-paleis in die skemer op. Die grootte van die pick slaan die GSR se asem skoon weg.
“Dit het seker honderde slaapkamers!” sê hy. “Beslis,” sê Sophie, al weet sy nie.
“Dan ek weer skoon ondermekaar,” sê die GSR.
“Hoe in die wye pêrel moet ons die Koningin se slaapkamer kry?”
“Kom ons gaan bietjie nader en kyk,” stel Sophie
voor.
Die GSR gly vorentoe deur die bome. Skielik gaan hy staan. Die groot oor waarin Sophie sit, draai eenkant toe. “Haai!” fluister sy, “ek sal uitval!”
“Sjuut!” fluister die GSR. “Ek hoor iets.” Hy staan agter ’n klomp hoë struike. Hy wag. Die oor draai dié-
kant toe en dáárdie kant toe. Sophie klou soos ’n neet. Die GSR wys met sy vinger deur die gaping in die bome en daar, so vyftig meter van hulle af, loop ’n man met ’n waghond aan ’n leiriem.
Die GSR bly staan soos ’n marmerbeeld. Sophie hou
asem op. Die man en hond stap aan en verdwyn.
“Jy’t gesê daar nie dolsate diékant,” fluister die GSR
kwaai.
“Hy’s nie ’n soldaat nie. Hy’s ’n nagwag,” verduidelik Sophie. “Ons moet maar net baie versigtig wees.”
“Ek bang nie erg,” sê die GSR. “Hierdie flip-flap
ore van my kan asem aan anderkant van tuin hoor.”
“Hoe lank nog voor dit lig word?” vra Sophie sag
gies.
“Baie amper,” antwoord die GSR. “Ons moet nou opmaak en gou skud.”
Hy beweeg vinnig deur die tuin en weer merk Sophie
hoe hy met die skaduwees saamsmelt. Sy voete maak geen geluid nie, nie eens wanneer hy op gruis loop nie.
Hulle is nou baie naby die agterste muur van die groot paleis. Die GSR se kop is gelyk met die vensters
van die tweede verdieping en Sophie, wat nog steeds in sy oor sit, kan natuurlik net so goed soos hy sien wat daarbo aangaan. Die gordyne

van al die vensters is toe-getrek. Nêrens gewaar hulle lig nie. In die verte hoor hulle die dowwe geluid van die verkeer wat om die groot sirkel beweeg.
Die GSR druk sy een oor teen die eerste venster. “Nee,” fluister hy.
“Wat luister jy?” vra Sophie baie saggies.
“Vir asemstem,” antwoord die GSR. “As ek luister na asem, kan ek sê of man of vrou. Dit man daarbinne, hy snorkel baie hard.”
Hy loop verder en druk sy lang, dun, swartgemantelde liggaam teen die kant van die gebou. By die volgende venster gaan hy weer staan.
“Nee,” fluister hy. Hy beweeg verder.
“Hierdie kamer molleeg,” fluister hy.
Hy luister fyn by nog ’n paar vensters, maar by elk-een skud hy sy groot kop.
Toe hy by die middel van die paleis kom, luister hy
by ’n oop venster en bly staan. “Aha!” fluister hy, “hier het ons vrou.”
Sophie voel ’n rilling by haar ruggraat afgaan. “Maar
wie?” fluister sy.
Die GSR sit sy vinger voor sy lippe om haar stil te maak. Hy steek sy hand uit en druk die gordyn op ’n skrefie oop.
Die oranje gloed van die Londense naghemel kruip in
die kamer in en skyn op die mure. Dis ’n groot kamer. Dis ’n pragtige kamer. ’n Wonderlike mat le op die vloer. Daar is ’n spieëlkas. ’n Bed. En op die kussing sien hulle die kop van ’n slapende vrou.
Sophie besef dadelik dat dit die gesig is wat sy so
dikwels al op posseëls en op muntstukke gesien het.
’n Paar oomblikke is sy sprakeloos. “Dit sy?” vra die GSR.
“Ja,” knik Sophie verdwaas.
Nou speel die GSR gou. Eers baie stadig en baie, baie versigtig stoot hy die onderste helfte van die skuif-raamvenster hoër op. Hy is werklik ’n kenner van ven ster s! Hy het al duisende in die loop van baie jare moes oopmaak om sy drome vir kinders te kon inblaas. Sommige van daardie vensters was weerbarstig. Sommige het gekraak. Ander het byna losgeraak met die oop maak. Hy is dankbaar dat hierdie venster glad geen ge-raas maak nie. Hy stoot dit ook net hoog genoeg op so-dat Sophie sal kan deurklim.
Toe trek hy die gordyne weer dig.
Hy vat vir Sophie tussen sy duim en voorvinger en lig haar saggies uit sy oor uit. Hy sit haar op die vensterbank neer sodat haar voete binnetoe oorhang.
“Moet nou net nie boems-bams agtertoe val!” fluister hy waarskuwend. “Jy moet styf vasklou met twee hande aan binnekant van vensterbank.”
Sophie maak soos hy sê.
Dis somer in Londen en eintlik ’n lekker nag, maar julle moenie

vergeet dat arme Sophie net in haar nagjurk daar sit nie. Sy sou wat wou gee om haar lekker warm kamerjas aan te he, nie net om haar warm te hou nie, maar ook om die witheid van haar nagjurk weg te steek sodat iemand haar nie dalk van onder af gewaar nie.

Die GSR haal die fles uit sy mantelsak. Hy draai die deksel los. Nou, baie versigtig, skink hy die kosbare droom by die wye kant van die trompet in. Hy steek die trompet diep in die kamer in, in die rigting van die

bed. Hy haal diep asem en met ’n geweldige whoefff! blaas hy die droom by die kamer in. Dan trek hy die trompet stadig en versigtig terug soos mens ’n koors-pennetjie uit iemand se mond haal.

“Sit jy maklik?” vra hy besorg.

“Ja dankie,” sê Sophie. Sy is stokstyf van vrees maar probeer om dit nie te wys nie. Sy draai haar kop en kyk ondertoe. Dit lyk asof die aarde kilometers ver onder haar lê. Dis soos ’n aaklige afgrond wat haar wil insluk.

“Hoe lank sal dit neem voor die droom werk?” vra sy met ’n fluisterstemmetjie.

“Somtyds neem dit ’n uur. Somtyds korter. Somtyds

langer. Maar dit sal werk.” Sophie sit tjoepstil.

“Ek woerts nou weg om in tuin te wag,” fluister die

GSR. “As jy my wil hê, sê net my naam. Ek sal baie vinnig kom.”

“Maar sal jy my ooit hoor?” vra sy.

“Jy vergeet hierdie goete,” glimlag hy en wys na sy ore.

“Tot siens,” fluister Sophie.

Skielik en heel onverwags buk die GSR vooroor en soen haar saggies op die wang.

Dit maak Sophie so bly dat sy wil huil.

Toe sy omdraai om na hom te kyk, is hy reeds weg. Hy het sommer net in die skaduwees verdwyn.

19. THE QUEEN

Dawn came at last, and the rim of a lemon-coloured sun rose up behind the roof-tops somewhere behind Victoria Station.
A while later, Sophie felt a little of its warmth on her back and was grateful.
In the distance, she heard a church clock striking. She counted the strikes. There were seven.
She found it almost impossible to believe that she, Sophie, a little orphan of no real importance in the world, was at this moment actually sitting high above the ground on the window-sill of the Queen of England's bedroom, with the Queen herself asleep in there behind the curtain not more than five yards away.
The very idea of it was absurd.
No one had ever done such a thing before.
It was a terrifying thing to be doing.
What would happen if the dream didn't work?
No one, least of all the Queen, would believe a word of her story.
It seemed possible that nobody had ever woken up to find a small child sitting behind the curtains on his or her window-sill.
The Queen was bound to get a shock.
Who wouldn't?
With all the patience of a small girl who has somethingimportant to wait for, Sophie sat motionless on the window-sill.
How much longer? she wondered.
What time do Queens wake up?
Faint stirrings and distant sounds came to her from deep inside the belly of the Palace.
Then, all at once, beyond the curtains, she heard the voice of the sleeper in the bedroom. It was a slightly blurred sleep-talker's voice. 'Oh no!' it cried out. 'No! Don't — Someone stop them! — Don't let them do it! — I can't bear it! — Oh please stop them! — It's horrible! — Oh, it's ghastly! — No! No! No! ...'
She is having the dream, Sophie told herself. It must be really horrid. I feel so sorry for her. But it has to be done.
After that, there were a few moans. Then there was a long silence.
Sophie waited. She looked over her shoulder. She was terrified that she would see the man with the dog down in the garden staring up at her. But the garden was deserted. A pale summer mist hung over it like smoke. It was an enormous garden, very beautiful, with a large funny-shaped lake at the far end. There was an island in the lake and there were ducks swimming on the water.

Inside the room, beyond the curtains, Sophie suddenly heard what was obviously a knock on the door. She heard the doorknob being turned. She heard someone entering the room.
'Good morning, Your Majesty,' a woman was saying. It was the voice of an oldish person.
There was a pause and then a slight rattle of china and silver.
'Will you have your tray on the bed, ma'am, or on the table?'
'Oh Mary! Something awful has just happened!' This was a voice Sophie had heard many times on radio and television, especially on Christmas Day. It was a very well-known voice.
'Whatever is it, ma'am?'
'I've just had the most frightful dream! It was a nightmare! It was awful!'
'Oh, I am sorry, ma'am. But don't be distressed. You're awake now and it will go away. It was only a dream, ma'am.'
'Do you know what I dreamt, Mary? I dreamt that girls and boys were being snatched out of their beds at boarding-school and were being eaten by the most ghastly giants! The giants were putting their arms in through the dormitory windows and plucking the children out with their fingers! One lot from a girls' school and another from a boys' school! It was all so … so vivid,Mary! It was so real!'
There was a silence. Sophie waited. She was quivering with excitement. But why the silence? Why didn't the other one, the maid, why didn't she say something?
'What on earth's the matter, Mary?' the famous voice was saying.
There was another silence.
'Mary! You've gone as white as a sheet! Are you feeling ill?'
There was suddenly a crash and a clatter of crockery which could only have meant that the tray the maid was carrying had fallen out of her hands.
'Mary!' the famous voice was saying rather sharply. 'I think you'd better sit down at once! You look as though you're going to faint! You really mustn't take it so hard just because I've had an awful dream.'
'That … that … that isn't the reason, ma'am.' The maid's voice was quivering terribly.
'Then for heaven's sake what is the reason?'
'I'm very sorry about the tray, ma'am.'
'Oh, don't worry about the tray. But what on earth was it that made you drop it? Why did you go white as a ghost all of a sudden?'
'You haven't seen the papers yet, have you, ma'am?'
'No, what do they say?'
Sophie heard the rustling of a newspaper as it was being handed over.
'It's like the very dream you had in the night, ma'am.'
'Rubbish, Mary. Where is it?'

'On the front page, ma'am. It's the big headlines.'
'Great Scott!' cried the famous voice. 'Eighteen girls vanish mysteriously from their beds at Roedean School! Fourteen boys disappear from Eton! Bones are found underneath dormitory windows!'
Then there was a pause punctuated by gasps from the famous voice as the newspaper article was clearly being read and digested.
'Oh, how ghastly!' the famous voice cried out. 'It's absolutely frightful! Bones under the windows! What can have happened? Oh, those poor children!'
'But ma'am … don't you see, ma'am …'
'See what, Mary?'
'Those children were taken away almost exactly as you dreamt it, ma'am!'
'Not by giants, Mary.'
'No, ma'am. But the bit about the girls and boys disappearing from their dormitories, you dreamt it so clearly and then it actually happened. That's why I came over all queer, ma'am.'
'I'm coming over a bit queer myself, Mary.'
'It gives me the shakes, ma'am, when something like that happens, it really does.'
'I don't blame you, Mary.'
'I shall get you some more breakfast, ma'am, and have this mess cleared up.'
'No! Don't go, Mary! Stay here a moment!'
Sophie wished she could see into the room, but she didn't dare touch the curtains. The famous voice began speaking again. 'I really did dream about those children, Mary. It was clear as crystal.'
'I know you did, ma'am.'
'I don't know how giants got into it. That was rubbish.'
'Shall I draw the curtains, ma'am, then we shall all feel better. It's a lovely day.'
'Please do.'
With a swish, the great curtains were pulled aside.
The maid screamed.
Sophie froze to the window-ledge.
The Queen, sitting up in her bed with The Times on her lap, glanced up sharply. Now it was her turn to freeze. She didn't scream as the maid had done. Queens are too self-controlled for that. She simply sat there staring wide-eyed and white-faced at the small girl who was perched on her window-sill in a nightie.
Sophie was petrified.
Curiously enough, the Queen looked petrified, too. One would have expected her to look surprised, as you or I would have done had we

discovered a small girl sitting on our window-sill first thing in the morning. But the Queen didn't look surprised. She looked genuinely frightened.

The maid, a middle-aged woman with a funny cap on the top of her head, was the first to recover. 'What in the name of heaven do you think you're doing in here?' she shouted angrily to Sophie.

Sophie looked beseechingly towards the Queen for help.

The Queen was still staring at Sophie. Gaping at her would be more accurate. Her mouth was slightly open, her eyes were round and wide as two saucers, and the whole of that famous rather lovely face was filled with disbelief.

'Now listen here, young lady, how on earth did you get into this room?' the maid shouted furiously.

'I don't believe it,' the Queen was murmuring. 'I simply don't believe it.'

'I'll take her out, ma'am, at once,' the maid was saying,

'No, Mary! No, don't do that!' The Queen spoke so sharply that the maid was quite taken aback. She turned and stared at the Queen. What on earth had come over her? It looked as though she was in a state of shock.

'Are you all right, ma'am?' the maid was saying.

When the Queen spoke again, it was in a strange strangled sort of whisper. 'Tell me, Mary,' she said, 'tell me quite truthfully, is there really a little girl sitting on my window-sill, or am I still dreaming?'

'She is sitting there all right, ma'am, as clear as daylight, but heaven only knows how she got there! Your Majesty is certainly not dreaming it this time!'

'But that's exactly what I did dream!' the Queen cried out. 'I dreamt that as well! I dreamt there would be a little girl sitting on my window-sill in her nightie and she would talk to me!'

The maid, with her hands clasped across her starched white bosom, was staring at her mistress with a look of absolute disbelief on her face. The situation was getting beyond her. She was lost. She had not been trained to cope with this kind of madness.

'Are you real?' the Queen said to Sophie.

'Y-y-yes, Your Majesty,' Sophie murmured.

'What is your name?'

'Sophie, Your Majesty.'

'And how did you get up on to my window-sill? No, don't answer that! Hang on a moment! I dreamed that part of it, too! I dreamed that a giant put you there!'

'He did, Your Majesty,' Sophie said.

The maid gave a howl of anguish and clasped her hands over her face.

'Control yourself, Mary,' the Queen said sharply. Then to Sophie she

said, 'You are not serious about the giant, are you?'
'Oh yes, Your Majesty. He's out there in the garden now.'
'Is he indeed,' the Queen said. The sheer absurdity of it all was helping her to regain her composure. 'So he's in the garden, is he?' she said, smiling a little.
'He is a good giant, Your Majesty,' Sophie said. 'You need not be frightened of him.'
'I'm delighted to hear it,' said the Queen, still smiling.
'He is my best friend, Your Majesty.'
'How nice,' the Queen said.
'He's a lovely giant, Your Majesty.'
'I'm quite sure he is,' the Queen said. 'But why have you and this giant come to see me?'
'I think you have dreamed that part of it, too, Your Majesty,' Sophie said calmly.
That pulled the Queen up short.
It took the smile right off her face.
She certainly had dreamed that part of it. She was remembering now how, at the end of her dream, it had said that a little girl and a big friendly giant would come and show her how to find the nine horrible man-eating giants.
But be careful, the Queen told herself. Keep very calm. Because this is surely not very far from the place where madness begins.
'You did dream that, didn't you, Your Majesty?' Sophie said.
The maid was out of it now. She just stood there goggling.
'Yes,' the Queen murmured. 'Yes, now you come to mention it, I did. But how do you know what I dreamed?'
'Oh, that's a long story, Your Majesty,' Sophie said. 'Would you like me to call the Big Friendly Giant?'
The Queen looked at the child. The child looked straight back at the Queen, her face open and quite serious. The Queen simply didn't know what to make of it. Was someone pulling her leg, she wondered.
'Shall I call him for you?' Sophie went on. 'You'll like him very much.'
The Queen took a deep breath. She was glad no one except her faithful old Mary was here to see what was going on. 'Very well,' she said. 'You may call your giant. No, wait a moment. Mary, pull yourself together and give me my dressing-gown and slippers.'
The maid did as she was told. The Queen got out of bed and put on a pale pink dressing-gown and slippers.
'You may call him now,' the Queen said.
Sophie turned her head towards the garden and called out, 'BFG! Her Majesty The Queen would like to see you!'
The Queen crossed over to the window and stood beside Sophie.
'Come down off that ledge,' she said. 'You're going to fall backwards

any moment.'
Sophie jumped down into the room and stood beside the Queen at the open window. Mary, the maid, stood behind them. Her hands were now planted firmly on her hips and there was a look on her face which seemed to say, 'I want no part of this fiasco.'
'I don't see any giant,' the Queen said.
'Please wait,' Sophie said.
'Shall I take her away now, ma'am?' the maid said.
'Take her downstairs and give her some breakfast,' the Queen said.
Just then, there was a rustle in the bushes beside the lake.
Then out he came!
Twenty-four feet tall, wearing his black cloak with the grace of a nobleman, still carrying his long trumpet in one hand, he strode magnificently across the Palace lawn towards the window.
The maid screamed.
The Queen gasped.
Sophie waved.
The BFG took his time. He was very dignified in his approach. When he was close to the window where the three of them were standing, he stopped and made a slow graceful bow. His head, after he had straightened up again, was almost exactly level with the watchers at the window.
'Your Majester,' he said. 'I is your humbug servant.' He bowed again.
Considering she was meeting a giant for the first time in her life, the Queen remained astonishingly self-composed. 'We are very pleased to meet you,' she said.
Down below, a gardener was coming across the lawn with a wheelbarrow. He caught sight of the BFG's legs over to his left. His gaze travelled slowly upwards along the entire height of the enormous body. He gripped the handles of the wheelbarrow. He swayed. He tottered. Then he keeled over on the grass in a dead faint. Nobody noticed him.
'Oh, Majester!' cried the BFG. 'Oh, Queen! Oh Monacher! Oh, Golden Sovereign! Oh, Ruler! Oh, Ruler of Straight Lines! Oh, Sultana! I is come here with my little friend Sophie … to give you a …' The BFG hesitated, searching for the word.
'To give me what?' the Queen said.
'A sistance,' the BFG said, beaming.
The Queen looked puzzled.
'He sometimes speaks a bit funny, Your Majesty,' Sophie said. 'He never went to school.'
'Then we must send him to school,' the Queen said. 'We have some very good schools in this country.'
'I has great secrets to tell Your Majester,' the BFG said.

‘I should be delighted to hear them,’ the Queen said. ‘But not in my dressing-gown.’
‘Shall you wish to get dressed, ma’am?’ the maid said.
‘Have either of you had breakfast?’ the Queen said.
‘Oh, could we?’ Sophie cried. ‘Oh, please! I haven’t eaten a thing since yesterday!’
‘I was about to have mine,’ the Queen said, ‘but Mary dropped it.’
The maid gulped.
‘I imagine we have more food in the Palace,’ the Queen said, speaking to the BFG. ‘Perhaps you and your little friend would care to join me.’
‘Will it be repulsant snozzcumbers, Majester?’ the BFG asked.
‘Will it be what?’ the Queen said.
‘Stinky snozzcumbers,’ the BFG said.
‘What is he talking about?’ the Queen said. ‘It sounds like a rude word to me.’ She turned to the maid and said, ‘Mary, ask them to serve breakfast for three in the … I think it had better be in the Ballroom. That has the highest ceiling.’ To the BFG, she said, ‘I’m afraid you will have to go through the door on your hands and knees. I shall send someone to show you the way.’
The BFG reached up and lifted Sophie out of the window. ‘You and I is leaving Her Majester alone to get dressed,’ he said.
‘No, leave the little girl here with me,’ the Queen said. ‘We’ll have to find something for her to put on. She can’t have breakfast in her nightie.’
The BFG returned Sophie to the bedroom.
‘Can we have sausages, Your Majesty?’ Sophie said. ‘And bacon and fried eggs?’
‘I think that might be managed,’ the Queen answered, smiling.
‘Just you wait till you taste it!’ Sophie said to the BFG. ‘No more snozzcumbers from now on!’

19. Die Koningin

Uiteindelik word dit dag en ’n suurlemoenkleurige son kom stadig oor die dakke van die huise agter Victoria-stasie op.
Die warmte van die son se strale streel Sophie se rug. Dis iets waaroor sy baie dankbaar is.
In die verte hoor sy ’n kerkklok slaan. Sy begin tel. Een … twee … drie … tot by sewe.
Sy vind dit moeilik om te glo dat sy, Sophie, ’n klein, baie onbelangrike weeskind, op hierdie oomblik regtig op die vensterbank van die Koningin van Engeland se slaapkamer sit, terwyl die Koningin self, nie meer as vier meter van haar af nie, aan die ander kant van die gordyn lê en slaap.
Die blote gedagte is laf.
Niemand het nog ooit vantevore so iets gewaag nie. En niemand - veral nie die Koningin - sal ’n enkele woord van haar storie glo nie.
Het enigiemand êrens in die wêreld al ooit wakker
geword en ’n vreemde dogtertjie op sy vensterbank ge-vind? Sy glo nie.
Die Koningin sal baie geskok wees. Wie sou nie?
Met die geduld van ’n klein dogtertjie wat vir iets baie belangriks wag, sit Sophie doodstil op die venster bank.
Hoeveel langer nog? wonder sy. Hoe laat word koninginne wakker?
Diep vanuit die paleis hoor sy al meer geluide van
mense wat begin roer.
Skielik hoor sy die stem van die slaper in die kamer. Die stem klink dof, soos iemand wat in sy slaap praat. “Ag, nee!” hoor Sophie. “Nee, moenie! Keer hulle! Moenie dat hulle dit dóén nie! Ek kan dit nie verdra nie! - Ag, asseblief tog! - Keer hulle! - Dis aaklig! - Dis onmenslik! Dis wreed! - Nee! Nee! Nee!”
Nou droom sy die droom, dink Sophie. Dit klink asof
dit regtig ’n aaklige nagmerrie is. Ek voel jammer vir haar, dink sy, maar ons moes dit doen.
Daarna hoor Sophie ’n paar krete. Dan is daar stilte.
Sophie wag. Sy draai weer haar kop sodat sy na die tuin kan kyk. Sy is bang dat die man met die hond haar dalk sal raaksien. Maar die tuin is verlate. ’n Bleek somer-mistigheid hang soos ’n rookskerm daaroor. Dis ’n enorme tuin, baie pragtig, met ’n eienaardig gevormde meer in die verste hoek. In die meer is daar ’n eiland, en ’n klomp eende wat rustig op die water ronddryf.
Aan die ander kant van die gordyn hoor Sophie skie lik ’n geklop aan die deur. Sy hoor hoe iemand die deurknop draai en die kamer

binnekom.
“Goeiemóre, U Majesteit,” sê ’n vrouestem. Dit
klink na die stem van ’n ouerige persoon.
Daar is stilte en dan hoor sy die geklink van koppies en pierings.
“Sal ek die skinkbord op die bed sit, mevrou, of op
die tafel?” vra die stem.
“Ag, Mary! ’n Aaklige ding het gebeur!”
Dis die stem wat Sophie al dikwels oor die radio en televisie gehoor het - veral op Kersdag. Dis ’n baie bekende stem.
“Wat het gebeur, mevrou?”
“Ek het so pas die naarste droom gehad. Dit was ’n nare, nare nagmerrie. Dit was onbeskryflik skokkend.”
“Ek is jammer, mevrou. Maar moenie ontsteld wees
nie. U is nou wakker en sal die droom gou vergeet. Dit was tog net ’n droom!”
“Weet jy wat ek gedroom het, Mary? Ek het gedroom
dat seuns en meisies uit skoolkoshuise deur die afgrys-likste reuse opgeëet is. Die reuse het eenvoudig hulle hande by vensters ingesteek en die kinders gegryp. Een klomp kinders uit ’n meisieskool en ’n ander klomp uit
’n seunskool. Dit was so duidelik, Mary. So helder! So werklik!”
Daar is ’n stilte. Sophie haal skaars asem. Sy bewe van opwinding. Maar waarom die stilte? Hoekom sê die ander een, die kamerbediende, dan niks nie?
“Wat op aarde makeer jy, Mary?” vra die beroemde
stem.
Weer is daar stilte.
“Mary! Jy is so wit soos ’n laken. Voel jy naar?” Sophie hoor die gekletter van breekware. Dit kan net
een ding beteken - die kamerbediende het die skinkbord laat val.
“Mary!” sê die beroemde stem ietwat skerp. “Gaan sit! Dit lyk asof jy gaan flou word. Jy moet jou regtig nie so ontstel net omdat ek ’n nagmerrie gehad het nie!”
“Dis … dis nie die rede nie,” sê Mary, en haar stem bewe. “U het nog nie vanoggend se koerante gesien nie, het u, mevrou?”
“Nee, nog nie. Is daar iets van belang in?”
Sophie hoor die gekraak van papier soos die koerant oorhandig word.
“Dis presies soos die droom wat u gehad het, me
vrou.”
“Onsin, Mary! Waar is die berig?”
“Op die voorblad, mevrou. Dis die hoofberig.” “Ongelooflik!” roep die beroemde stem.
Sy lees.
“Agttien skooldogters verdwyn op geheimsinnige wyse uit hulle

beddens by Roedean-skool. Veertien seuns verdwyn by Eton! Bene onder slaapkamervensters gevind."
"Hoe afgryslik," sê die beroemde stem. "Hoe ongelooflik! Bene onder die vensters! Daardie arme kinders!"
"Maar, mevrou, sien u nie …"
"Sien ek wat, Mary?"
"Daardie kinders is op presies dieselfde manier weg-geneem soos in u droom."
"Nie deur reuse nie, Mary!"
"Nee, miskien nie, mevrou. Maar die berig oor die seuns en meisies wat uit die slaapsale verdwyn het … U het dit tog so duidelik gedroom asof dit werklik ge-beur het. Dis wat my so ontstel!"
"Ek voel self nou baie ontsteld, Mary."
"Ek kry skoon die bewerasie as sulke dinge gebeur, mevrou."
"Ek blameer jou nie, Mary."
"Sal ek gou nog ontbyt gaan haal en hier laat opruim, mevrou?"
"Nee, nee, wag. Bly 'n rukkie hier, Mary."
Sophie wens sy kan inloer, maar sy durf nie aan die gordyne raak nie. Die beroemde stem praat weer. "Ek hét gedroom van daardie kinders, Mary. Dit was so hel-der soos daglig."
"Ek weet u het, mevrou."
"Ek weet net nie hoe die reuse in die prentjie pas nie. Dit is onsinnig."
"Sal ek die gordyne ooptrek, mevrou? Die sonlig sal
gou-gou die nagmerrie laat verdwyn." "Asseblief, ja."
Met 'n swiesj! word die lang, swaar gordyne oopge-trek.
Die kamerbediende skree.
Sophie bly sit asof sy versteen het.
Die Koningin, wat nog in die bed sit met die koerant in haar hande, sit óók asof versteen. Sy skree egter nie soos die kamerbediende nie. Koninginne doen nie sulke dinge nie. Maar sy sit grootoog en kyk met 'n wit gesig na die klein dogtertjie in die nagjurk wat soos 'n voël op 'n tak aan die vensterbank vasklou.
Sophie is sprakeloos.
Die Koningin ook. 'n Mens sou natuurlik verwag dat sy verbaas sou wees, soos ek en jy ook maar sal wees as ons een oggend vroeg 'n dogtertjie op ons vensterbank kry. Maar die Koningin lyk glad nie verbaas nie. Sy lyk werklik beangs.
Die kamerbediende, 'n middeljarige vrou met 'n snaakse mussie op haar kop, kom eerste by. "Wat op aarde maak jy hier?" skree sy met 'n kwaai stem.
Sophie kyk smekend na die Koningin.
Die Koningin staar nog steeds na Sophie. Eintlik gaap sy haar aan. Haar mond hang effens oop, haar oë is rond en groot, soos twee pierings, en haar hele gesig is vertrek van ongeloof, ja, én van vrees.

“Luister nou, juffertjie,” raas die kamerbediende
harder as tevore. “Sê bietjie, hoe het jy hier gekom?”
“Ek glo dit nie,” sê die Koningin. “Ek gló dit eenvoudig nie!”
“Ek sal haar dadelik wegneem, mevrou,” sê die kamerbediende.
“Nee, Mary, moenie.” Die Koningin klink ineens so kwaai dat sy die kamerbediende skoon van stryk bring.
Die vrou staar die Koningin aan.
“Voel u sleg, mevrou?” vra sy besorg.
Toe die Koningin praat, klink haar stem skor en vreemd. “Sê my, Mary, vertel my die waarheid. Is dit régtig ’n dogtertjie wat daar op die vensterbank sit, of droom ek nog steeds?”
“Sy’s regtig daar, mevrou - die stoute ding - maar
hoe sy daar gekom het, weet nugter. U droom beslis nie nou nie!”
“Maar dis presies wat ek gedroom het!” roep die Ko
ningin uit. “Ek het dit óók gedroom. Ek het gedroom
’n klein dogtertjie in ’n nagjurk sit op my kamer se ven
sterbank en praat met my!”
Die kamerbediende staar die Koningin ongelowig aan. Die hele situasie raak nou buite beheer. Sy voel verlore. Sy het nog nooit met so ’n deurmekaarspul te doen gehad nie.
“Is jy werklik ’n mens?” vra die Koningin vir
Sophie.
“Ja … ja … U Majesteit,” fluister Sophie.
“En hoe het jy op die vensterbank gekom? Nee wag, moenie antwoord nie. Ek het dit mos gedroom. ’n Reus het jou daar gesit.”
“Hy het, U Majesteit.”
Die kamerbediende gee ’n kreet van ontsteltenis en sit haar hande voor haar gesig.
“Bly kalm, Mary,” sê die Koningin streng. Sy draai
terug na Sophie en sê: “Dit was nie régtig ’n reus nie, was dit?”
“O ja, U Majesteit, dit was. Hy wag daar in die tuin.”
“Werklik?” Die absurditeit van die gebeure help die Koningin om haar gewone kalmte te herwin. “Hy is dus in die tuin?” sê-vra sy en glimlag.
“Hy is ’n goeie reus, U Majesteit,” verduidelik Sophie ernstig. “U hoef regtig nie vir hom bang te wees nie.”
“Ek is verlig om dit te hoor,” sê die Koningin droog—
weg.
“Hy is my beste vriend, U Majesteit.” “Dis gaaf.”
“Hy’s regtig ’n dierbare reus, U Majesteit!”
“Ek glo jou,” sê die Koningin. “Maar waarom het jy en jou vriend die reus vir my kom kuier?”
“Ek dink u het daardie deel ook gedroom, U Majes
teit.”

Die Koningin sit regop.
Die glimlag verdwyn van haar gesig.
Sy het beslis daardie deel gedroom, dit onthou sy nou. Aan die einde van die droom sou ’n klein dogter tjie en ’n Groot Sagmoedige Reus vir haar wys waar sy die aaklige reuse kan kry.
“Kop hou,” sê die Koningin vir haarself. “Bly kalm. Dis hier waar die droom werklikheid word.”
“U hét dit mos gedroom, nie waar nie, U Majes
teit?”
Die kamerbediende is te verslae om iets te sê, maar haar oë peul byna uit haar kop.
“Ja,” peins die Koningin, “ja, nou onthou ek. Maar hoe weet jy wat ek gedroom het?”
“Dis ’n lang storie, U Majesteit. Sal ek solank die
Groot Sagmoedige Reus roep?”
Die Koningin kyk na die kind. Die kind kyk na die Koningin, haar gesiggie ernstig en eerlik. Die Koningin weet nie mooi hoe sy dit het nie. Skeer iemand dalk die gek met haar?
“Sal ek hom laat kom, U Majesteit?” vra Sophie weer. “Ek is seker u sal baie van hom hou.”
Die Koningin haal diep asem. Sy is dankbaar dat niemand buiten die getroue Mary by haar in die kamer is nie.
“Nou goed dan,” sê sy. “Jy kan jou vriend maar roep. Nee, wag eers. Mary, ruk jou reg en gee my ka mer j as en pantoffels aan.”
Mary doen soos sy beveel is. Die Koningin klim uit die bed en trek die ligpienk kamerjas en bypassende pantoffels aan.
“Nou kan jy hom maar roep,” sê sy.
Sophie draai haar kop buitetoe en roep saggies: “GSR, die Koningin wil jou graag sien!”
Die Koningin stap na die venster en gaan langs Sophie staan.
“Klim af van die vensterbank,” beveel sy.
Sophie spring af. Mary, die kamerbediende, staan ag-ter hulle met haar hande kordaat in haar sye, en dit lyk kompleet asof sy wil sê: Ek gaan nie saamspeel met hierdie verspottigheid nie!
“Ek sien nie ’n reus nie!” sê die Koningin.
“Wag net ’n oomblikkie, U Majesteit,” vra Sophie beleef. “Ek is seker u sal sommer baie van hom hou.”
Die Koningin trek haar asem diep in.
“Sal ek haar wegneem, mevrou?” vra Mary.
“Ja, neem haar saam ondertoe en sorg dat sy ontbyt kry,” sê die Koningin.
Net toe hoor hulle ’n geruis van blare.
En daar kom die reus tussen die bome uitgeloop.
Die GSR, agt meter lank, met sy swart mantel om sy skouers en met

die lang trompet in die een hand, loop trots en regop oor die grasperk na hulle toe.
Die kamerbediende skree.
Die Koningin snak na haar asem. Sophie wuif vir hom.
Die GSR is glad nie haastig nie. Hy kom baie waardig aangestap. By die venster waar hulle hom nog aangaap, gaan staan hy en maak ’n diep buiging. Toe hy orent kom, is sy kop net mooi gelyk met die drie toeskouers by die venster.
“Majestator,” sê hy ernstig, “ek u verdienstelike die-naar.” Weer buig hy.
Vir iemand wat nog nooit vantevore ’n reus gesien het nie, is die Koningin besonder kalm. “Aangename kennis,” sê sy.
Ver ondertoe stoot ’n tuinier ’n kruiwa. Hy sien eers net die reus se bene. Toe volg sy oë die bene boontoe en sien hy die enorme liggaam. Hy klou aan die handvatsels van die kruiwa vas. Hy waggel. Hy kantel. Toe dop hy in ’n floute om. Maar niemand sien hom eens raak nie.
“O Majestator!” sê die GSR. “O Koningin! O goue Kroon! O Monargister! O Heerser! Heerser van alle heerlinge! O Sultana! Ek kom hier met my maatjie Sophie om u te gee … ”
“Wat te gee?” vra die Koningin. “Raad in tyd van siekte!” sê hy. Die Koningin lyk verbyster.
“Hy praat soms bietjie snaaks, U Majesteit,” sê
Sophie vinnig. “Hy het nooit skoolgegaan nie.”
“Dan moet ons hom skool toe stuur,” sê die Konin
gin beslis. “Hier in ons land is baie goeie skole.”
“Ek het groot geheimnisse om u te bestel, o Kroon,”
sê die GSR.
“Ek sal dit baie graag wil hoor, maar nie in my kamerjas nie.”
“Wil u eers gou aantrek, mevrou?” vra die kamer
bediende.
“Het julle twee al ontbyt gehad?” vra die Koningin.
“O, mag ons asseblief kry?” smeek Sophie. “Ek het van gister af nog niks geëet nie.”
“Ek wou my ontbyt ook graag eet,” sê die Koningin.
“Maar Mary het die skinkbord laat val!” Die kamerbediende sluk.
“Maar ek reken daar is darem nog kos in die kombuis,” sê die Koningin met ’n glimlag. Sy draai na die GSR. “Miskien wil u en u vriendinnetjie saam met my ontbyt nuttig?”
“Gaan ons viesaaklige snorkommers kry, o Kroon?”
vra die GSR.
“Waarvan praat hy?” vra die Koningin. “Dit klink vir my na ’n lelike woord. Mary,” beveel sy die kamer bediende, “bestel asseblief ontbyt vir drie. Ons sal in

… in … die balsaal eet. Dit het die hoogste plafon.” Vir die GSR sê sy: “Ek is bevrees u sal hande-viervoet deur die deur moet kruip. Ek sal iemand stuur om u die pad te wys.”

Die GSR steek sy hand deur die venster en tel Sophie op. “Ons moet eers loop,” sê hy, “sodat Haar Hooglied kan aantrek.”

“Nee,” sê die Koningin, “laat haar bly. Ons sal moet klere soek wat haar pas. Sy kan nie in haar nagjurk ont byt eet nie.”

Die GSR sit Sophie weer op die vloer neer.

“Mag ons wors eet, asseblief tog, U Majesteit?” vra
Sophie gretig. “En spek en gebakte eiers?”

“Ek dink ons kan dit reël,” sê die Koningin met ’n vriendelike laggie.

“Wag net totdat jy dit próé, GSR!” sê Sophie opgewonde. “Nooit weer hoef jy snorkommers te eet nie!”

20. THE ROYAL BREAKFAST

There was a frantic scurry among the Palace servants when orders were received from the Queen that a twenty-four-foot giant must be seated with Her Majesty in the Great Ballroom within the next half-hour.

The butler, an imposing personage named Mr Tibbs, was in supreme command of all the palace servants and he did the best he could in the short time available. A man does not rise to become the Queen's butler unless he is gifted with extraordinary ingenuity, adaptability, versatility, dexterity, cunning, sophistication, sagacity, discretion and a host of other talents that neither you nor I possess. Mr Tibbs had them all. He was in the butler's pantry sipping an early morning glass of light ale when the order reached him. In a split second he had made the following calculations in his head: if a normal six-foot man requires a three-foot-high table to eat off, a twenty-four-foot giant will require a twelve-foot-high table.

And if a six foot man requires a chair with a two-foot-high seat, a twenty-four-foot giant will require a chair with an eight-foot-high seat.

Everything, Mr Tibbs told himself, must be multiplied by four. Two breakfast eggs must become eight. Four rashers of bacon must become sixteen. Three pieces of toast must become twelve, and so on. These calculations about food were immediately passed on to Monsieur Papillion, the royal chef.

Mr Tibbs skimmed into the ballroom (butlers don't walk, they skim over the ground) followed by a whole army of footmen. The footmen all wore knee-breeches and every one of them displayed beautifully rounded calves and ankles. There is no way you can become a royal footman unless you have a well-turned ankle. It is the first thing they look at when you are interviewed.

'Push the grand piano into the centre of the room,' Mr Tibbs whispered. Butlers never raise their voices above the softest whisper.

Four footmen moved the piano.

'Now fetch a large chest-of-drawers and put it on top of the piano,' Mr Tibbs whispered.

Three other footmen fetched a very fine Chippendale mahogany chest-of-drawers and placed it on top of the piano.

'That will be his chair,' Mr Tibbs whispered. 'It is exactly eight feet off the ground. Now we shall make a table upon which this gentleman may eat his breakfast in comfort. Fetch me four very tall grandfather clocks. There are plenty of them around the Palace. Let each clock be

twelve feet high.'

Sixteen footmen spread out around the Palace to find the clocks. They were not easy to carry and required four footmen to each one.

'Place the four clocks in a rectangle eight feet by four alongside the grand piano,' Mr Tibbs whispered.

The footmen did so.

'Now fetch me the young Prince's ping-pong table,' Mr Tibbs whispered.

The ping-pong table was carried in.

'Unscrew its legs and take them away,' Mr Tibbs whispered. This was done.

'Now place the ping-pong table on top of the four grandfather clocks,' Mr Tibbs whispered. To manage this, the footmen had to stand on stepladders.

Mr Tibbs stood back to survey the new furniture. 'None of it is in the classic style,' he whispered, 'but it will have to do.' He gave orders that a damask table-cloth should be draped over the ping-pong table, and in the end it looked really quite elegant after all.

At this point, Mr Tibbs was seen to hesitate. The footmen all stared at him, aghast. Butlers never hesitate, not even when they are faced with the most impossible problems. It is their job to be totally decisive at all times.

'Knives and forks and spoons,' Mr Tibbs was heard to mutter. 'Our cutlery will be like little pins in his hands.'

But Mr Tibbs didn't hesitate for long. 'Tell the head gardener,' he whispered, 'that I require immediately a brand new unused garden fork and also a spade. And for a knife we shall use the great sword hanging on the wall in the morning-room. But clean the sword well first. It was last used to cut off the head of King Charles the First and there may still be a little dried blood on the blade.'

When all this had been accomplished, Mr Tibbs stood near the centre of the Ballroom casting his expert butler's eye over the scene. Had he forgotten anything? He certainly had. What about a coffee cup for the large gentleman?

'Fetch me,' he whispered, 'the biggest jug you can find in the kitchen.'

A splendid one gallon porcelain water-jug was brought in and placed on the giant's table beside the garden fork and the garden spade and the great sword.

So much for the giant.

Mr Tibbs then had the footmen move a small delicate table and two chairs alongside the giant's table. This was for the Queen and for Sophie. The fact that the giant's table and chair towered far above the smaller table simply could not be helped.

All these arrangements were only just completed when the Queen,

now fully dressed in a trim skirt and cashmere cardigan, entered the Ballroom holding Sophie by the hand. A pretty blue dress that had once belonged to one of the Princesses had been found for Sophie, and to make her look prettier still, the

Queen had picked up a superb sapphire brooch from her dressing-table and had pinned it on the left side of Sophie's chest. The Big Friendly Giant followed behind them, but he had an awful job getting through the door. He had to squeeze himself through on his hands and knees, with two footmen pushing him from behind and two pulling from the front. But he got through in the end. He had removed his black cloak and got rid of his trumpet, and was now wearing his ordinary simple clothes.

As he walked across the Ballroom he had to stoop quite a lot to avoid hitting the ceiling. Because of this he failed to notice an enormous crystal chandelier. Crash went his head right into the chandelier. A shower of glass fell upon the poor BFG. 'Gunghummers and bogswinkles!' he cried. 'What was that?'

'It was Louis the Fifteenth,' the Queen said, looking slightly put out.

'He's never been in a house before,' Sophie said.

Mr Tibbs scowled. He directed four footmen to clear up the mess, then, with a disdainful little wave of the hand, he indicated to the giant that he should seat himself on top of the chest-of-drawers on top of the grand piano.

'What a phizz-whizzing flushbunking seat!' cried the BFG. 'I is going to be bug as a snug in a rug up here.'

'Does he always speak like that?' the Queen asked.

'Quite often,' Sophie said. 'He gets tangled up with his words.'

The BFG sat down on the chest-of-drawers-piano and gazed in wonder around the Great Ballroom. 'By gumdrops!' he cried. 'What a spliffling whoppsy room we is in! It is so gigantuous I is needing bicirculers and telescoops to see what is going on at the other end!'

Footmen arrived carrying silver trays with fried eggs, bacon, sausages and fried potatoes.

At this point, Mr Tibbs suddenly realized that in order to serve the BFG at his twelve-foot-high-grandfather-clock table, he would have to climb to the top of one of the tall stepladders. What's more, he must do it balancing a huge warm plate on the palm of one hand and holding a gigantic silver coffee-pot in the other. A normal man would have flinched at the thought of it. But good butlers never flinch. Up he went, up and up and up, while the Queen and Sophie watched him with great interest. It is possible they were both secretly hoping he would lose his balance and go crashing to the floor. But good butlers never crash.

At the top of the ladder, Mr Tibbs, balancing like an acrobat, poured

the BFG's coffee and placed the enormous plate before him. On the plate there were eight eggs, twelve sausages, sixteen rashers of bacon and a heap of fried potatoes.
'What is this please, Your Majester?' the BFG asked, peering down at the Queen.
'He has never eaten anything except snozzcumbers before in his life,' Sophie explained. 'They taste revolting.'
'They don't seem to have stunted his growth,' the Queen said.
The BFG grabbed the garden spade and scooped up all the eggs, sausages, bacon and potatoes in one go and shovelled them into his enormous mouth.
'By goggles!' he cried. 'This stuff is making snozzcumbers taste like swatchwallop!'
The Queen glanced up, frowning. Mr Tibbs looked down at his toes and his lips moved in silent prayer.
'That was only one titchy little bite,' the BFG said. 'Is you having any more of this delunctious grubble in your cupboard, Majester?'
'Tibbs,' the Queen said, showing true regal hospitality, 'fetch the gentleman another dozen fried eggs and a dozen sausages.'
Mr Tibbs swam out of the room muttering unspeakable words to himself and wiping his brow with a white handkerchief.
The BFG lifted the huge jug and took a swallow. 'Owch!' he cried, blowing a mouthful across the ballroom. 'Please, what is this horrible swigpill I is drinking, Majester?'
'It's coffee,' the Queen told him. 'Freshly roasted.'
'It's filthsome!' the BFG cried out. 'Where is the frobscottle?'
'The what?' the Queen asked.
'Delumptious fizzy frobscottle,' the BFG answered. 'Everyone must be drinking frobscottle with breakfast, Majester. Then we can all be whizzpopping happily together afterwards.'
'What does he mean?' the Queen said, frowning at Sophie. 'What is whizzpopping?'
Sophie kept a very straight face. 'BFG,' she said, 'there is no frobscottle here and whizzpopping is strictly forbidden!'
'What!' cried the BFG. 'No frobscottle? No whizzpopping? No glumptious music? No boom-boom- boom?'
'Absolutely not,' Sophie told him firmly.
'If he wants to sing, please don't stop him,' the Queen said.
'He doesn't want to sing,' Sophie said.
'He said he wants to make music,' the Queen went on. 'Shall I send for a violin?'
'No, Your Majesty,' Sophie said. 'He's only joking.'
A sly little smile crossed the BFG's face. 'Listen,' he said, peering down at Sophie, 'if they isn't having any frobscottle here in the Palace, I can

still go whizzpopping perfectly well without it if I is trying hard enough.'
'No!' cried Sophie. 'Don't! You're not to! I beg you!'
'Music is very good for the digestion,' the Queen said. 'When I'm up in Scotland, they play the bagpipes outside the window while I'm eating. Do play something.'
'I has Her Majester's permission!' cried the BFG, and all at once he let fly with a whizzpopper that sounded as though a bomb had exploded in the room.
The Queen jumped.
'Whoopee!' shouted the BFG. 'That is better than bagglepipes, is it not, Majester?'
It took the Queen a few seconds to get over the shock. 'I prefer the bagpipes,' she said. But she couldn't stop herself smiling.
During the next twenty minutes, a whole relay of footmen were kept busy hurrying to and from the kitchen carrying third helpings and fourth helpings and fifth helpings of fried eggs and sausages for the ravenous and delighted BFG.
When the BFG had consumed his seventy-second fried egg, Mr Tibbs sidled up to the Queen. He bent low from the waist and whispered in her ear, 'Chef sends his apologies, Your Majesty, and he says he has no more eggs in the kitchen.'
'What's wrong with the hens?' the Queen said.
'Nothing's wrong with the hens, Your Majesty,' Mr Tibbs whispered.
'Then tell them to lay more,' the Queen said. She looked up at the BFG. 'Have some toast and marmalade while you're waiting,' she said to him.
'The toast is finished,' Mr Tibbs whispered, 'and chef says there is no more bread.'
'Tell him to bake more,' the Queen said.
While all this was going on, Sophie had been telling the Queen everything, absolutely everything about her visit to Giant Country. The Queen listened, appalled. When Sophie had finished, the Queen looked up at the BFG who was sitting high above her. He was now eating a sponge-cake.
'Big Friendly Giant,' she said, 'last night those man-eating brutes came to England. Can you remember where they went the night before?'
The BFG put a whole round sponge-cake into his mouth and chewed it slowly while he thought about this question. 'Yes, Majester,' he said. 'I do think I is remembering where they said they was going the night before last. They was galloping off to Sweden for the Sweden sour taste.'
'Fetch me a telephone,' the Queen commanded.
Mr Tibbs placed the instrument on the table. The Queen lifted the

receiver. 'Get me the King of Sweden,' she said.
'Good morning,' the Queen said. 'Is everything all right in Sweden?'
'Everything is terrible!' the King of Sweden answered. 'There is panic in the capital! Two nights ago, twenty-six of my loyal subjects disappeared! My whole country is in a panic!'
'Your twenty-six loyal subjects were all eaten by giants,' the Queen said. 'Apparently they like the taste of Swedes.'
'Why do they like the taste of Swedes?' the King asked.
'Because the Swedes of Sweden have a sweet and sour taste. So says the BFG,' the Queen said.
'I don't know whatyou're talking about,' the King said, growing testy. 'It's hardly a joking matter when one's loyal subjects are being eaten like popcorn.'
'They've eaten mine as well,' the Queen said.
'Who's they, for heaven's sake?' the King asked.
'Giants,' the Queen said.
'Look here,' the King said, 'are you feeling all right?'
'It's been a rough morning,' the Queen said. 'First I had a horrid nightmare, then the maid dropped my breakfast and now I've got a giant on the piano.'
'You need a doctor quick!' cried the King.
'I'll be all right,' the Queen said. 'I must go now. Thanks for your help.' She replaced the receiver.
'Your BFG is right,' the Queen said to Sophie. 'Those nine man-eating brutes did go to Sweden.'
'It's horrible,' Sophie said. 'Please stop them, Your Majesty.'
'I'd like to make one more check before I call out the troops,' the Queen said. Once more, she looked up at the BFG. He was eating doughnuts now, popping them into his mouth ten at a time, like peas. 'Think hard, BFG,' she said. 'Where did those horrid giants say they were galloping off to three nights ago?'
The BFG thought long and hard.
'Ho-ho!' he cried at last. 'Yes, I is remembering!'
'Where?' asked the Queen.
'One was off to Baghdad,' the BFG said. 'As they is galloping past my cave, Fleshlumpeater is waving his arms and shouting at me, "I is off to Baghdad and I is going to Baghdad and mum and every one of their ten children as well!"'
Once more, the Queen lifted the receiver. 'Get me the Lord Mayor of Baghdad,' she said. 'If they don't have a Lord Mayor, get me the next best thing.'
In five seconds, a voice was on the line. 'Here is the Sultan of Baghdad speaking,' the voice said.
'Listen, Sultan,' the Queen said. 'Did anything unpleasant happen in

your city three nights ago?'

'Every night unpleasant things are happening in Baghdad,' the Sultan said. 'We are chopping off people's heads like you are chopping parsley.'

'I've never chopped parsley in my life,' the Queen said. 'I want to know if anyone has disappeared recently in Baghdad?'

'Only my uncle, Caliph Haroun al Rashid,' the Sultan said. 'He disappeared from his bed three nights ago together with his wife and ten children.'

'There you is!' cried the BFG, whose wonderful ears enabled him to hear what the Sultan was saying to the Queen on the telephone. 'Fleshlumpeater did that one! He went off to Baghdad to bag dad and mum and all the little kiddles!'

The Queen replaced the receiver. 'That proves it,' she said, looking up at the BFG. 'Your story is apparently quite true. Summon the Head of the Army and the Head of the Air Force immediately!'

20. Die koninklike ontbyt

Daar is ’n groot konsternasie toe die paleisbediendes opdrag kry dat ’n agt meter lange reus binne die volgende halfuur saam met die Koningin ontbyt gaan nuttig—
Die hofmeester, ’n baie belangrike persoon by name
meneer Tibbs, is in beheer van die paleispersoneel, en hy doen sy bes onder die moeilike omstandighede. ’n Mens bereik nie so ’n hoë pos tensy jy buitengewone talente het nie - aanpasbaarheid, vindingrykheid, hand-vaardigheid, bedrewenheid, gesofistikeerdheid, wysheid, diskresie, lojaliteit en ’n hele boel ander talente wat nie ek óf julle het nie. Meneer Tibbs het hulle almal. Hy was in die spens waar hy gewoonlik soggens vroeg sy ligte biertjie drink, toe die bevel hom bereik. In ’n oog-wink maak hy die volgende berekenings: as ’n normale twee meter lange man ’n een meter hoë tafel nodig het om by te eet, het ’n agt meter lange reus ’n vier meter hoë tafel nodig.
En as ’n twee meter lange man ’n stoel met ’n half meter hoë sitplek gebruik, sal ’n agt meter lange reus ’n twee meter hoë sitplek verwelkom.
En wat die kos betref, sê meneer Tibbs vir homself,
moet alles met vier vermenigvuldig word. Twee eiers word agt. Vier stukke spek word sestien. Drie snye roosterbrood word twaalf, ensovoorts. Hierdie bereke nings word dadelik gestuur na die koninklike sjef, monsieur Papillon.
Meneer Tibbs gly deur die balsaal - hofmeesters loop nie, hulle gly liggies oor die vloer - gevolg deur ’n groot aantal lakeie. Die lakeie dra almal kniebroeke so-dat hulle pragtig geronde kuite en hulle netjiese enkels mooi kan vertoon. Daar is geen manier om ’n koninklike lakei te word tensy jy ’n goedgevormde enkel het nie. Dis die heel eerste vereiste wat gestel word.
“Stoot die vleuelklavier in die middel van die saal,” fluister meneer Tibbs. Hofmeesters verhef nooit hulle stemme bó ’n fluistering nie.
Vier lakeie skuif die klavier tot in die middel van die
saal.
“Gaan haal ’n groot laaikas en sit dit bo-op die kla
vier,” fluister meneer Tibbs.
Drie ander lakeie gaan haal ’n pragtige Chippendale-laaikas van mahoniehout en plaas dit bo-op die klavier.
“Dit sal sy stoel wees,” fluister meneer Tibbs. “Dis byna twee meter hoog. Nou moet ons ’n tafel prakseer waarby hierdie groot meneer met gemak sy ontbyt kan eet. Gaan haal gou vier van die grootste staanhorlosies. Daar is baie van hulle. Maar sorg dat elkeen ongeveer

vier meter hoog is."
Sestien lakeie fynkam die paleis vir die horlosies. Die horlosies is so swaar dat vier lakeie aan een moet dra.
"Plaas die horlosies reghoekig - twee meter by een
meter," sê meneer Tibbs in sy fluisterstem.
Die lakeie gehoorsaam.
"Gaan haal nou haastig die prins se tafeltennistafel,"
fluister meneer Tibbs.
Die tafeltennistafel word ingedra.
"Skroef die pote los en verwyder hulle," beveel me
neer Tibbs saggies. Dit word gedoen.
"Plaas nou die blad bo-op die staanhorlosies," fluis ter meneer Tibbs. Om dit reg te kry, moet die lakeie 'n trapleer gebruik.
Meneer Tibbs gaan staan 'n ent weg en aanskou hulle handewerk.
"Dis nou nie juis in die klassieke styl nie," fluister
hy, "maar vir die doel is dit heeltemal skaflik." Hy gee bevele dat 'n groot blou damas-tafelkleed oor die blad gedrapeer moet word en uiteindelik sien dit heel elegant daar uit.
Nou lyk dit asof meneer Tibbs 'n oomblik weifel. Die
lakeie staar hom aan, sprakeloos. Hofmeesters weifel nooit nie, al staar die verskriklikste probleme hulle in die gesig. Hulle moet altyd beslis en oortuigend optree.
"Messe en vurke," hoor hulle hom mompel. "Ons eetgerei sal soos spelde in sy hande wees."
Meneer Tibbs weifel egter nie lank nie. "Sê vir die hooftuinier," fluister hy dringend, "ons het onmiddellik
'n splinternuwe ongebruikte tuinvurk en graaf nodig.
Vir 'n mes gebruik ons die groot swaard wat in die woonkamer hang. Maar maak dit eers goed skoon. Dis laas gebruik om die kop van koning Karel die Eerste af te kap, en daar kleef miskien nog 'n bietjie droë bloed aan."
Toe al hierdie bevele haarfyn uitgevoer is, beskou meneer Tibbs die tafel met 'n kennersoog. Het hy dalk iets vergeet? Beslis, ja. Wat van 'n koffiekoppie vir die groot meneer?
"Gaan haal vir my die grootste beker wat julle in die kombuis kan kry," fluister hy.
'n Pragtige vyf liter porseleinwaterbeker word inge-bring en op die reuse-tafel langs die tuinvurk en graaf en die groot skerp swaard neergesit.
Dis nou vir die GSR.
Toe laat meneer Tibbs 'n klein tafel en twee stoele langs die groot tafel plaas. Dit is vir die Koningin en vir Sophie. Die feit dat die reus se tafel bo die Konin gin s'n uittroon, kan nie verhelp word nie.
Alles is net mooi gereed toe die Koningin, geklee in

’n netjiese romp en sagte woltrui, die balsaal binnekom met Sophie aan haar hand, ’n Mooi blou rokkie wat aan een van die prinsessies behoort het, is vir Sophie ge-vind, en om haar nog mooier te laat lyk, het die Konin gin ’n pragtige safflerborsspeld van haar spieëlkas ge-neem en links op Sophie se bors vasgespeld. Die Groot Sagmoedige Reus loop agterna, maar hy het ’n groot stryd om by die deur in te kom. Hy probeer hande-viervoet deurkruip. Twee lakeie stoot van agter en twee trek van voor. Na veel gesukkel is hy eindelik binne.
Hy haal sy swart mantel af, sit sy trompet neer en loop koes-koes deur die saal om nie sy kop teen die pla-fon te stamp nie. Met al die gekoes merk hy nooit die
tamaai kristalkroonkandelaar op nie. Ghwar! stamp sy
kop teen die lig. ’n Stortvloed glasstukkies val op die arme GSR.
“Kopstampers en klappertand!” skree hy. “Wat de
kloos dit?”
“Dit wás Lodewyk die Vyftiende se kroonkandelaar,”
sê die Koningin en lyk effens van stryk.
“Dis die eerste keer dat hy binne-in ’n huis kom,” sê
Sophie versigtig.
Meneer Tibbs frons. Hy beveel vier lakeie om die stukkies glas op te vee, en met ’n minagtende gebaar van die hand wys hy vir die reus dat hy bo-op die laaikas, wat bo-op die vleuelklavier rus, moet sit.
“Wat ’n wapslapperige sitplek!” roep die GSR ver—
heug uit. “Hier ek so tuis soos ’n luis in ’n huis.” “Praat hy altyd so eienaardig?” vra die Koningin.
“Ja, dikwels,” antwoord Sophie. “Die moeilikheid is dat sy woorde sommerso deurmekaar raak.”
Die GSR sit op die laaikas-klavier en kyk verbaas
rond. “Gommelastiek!” sê hy. “Wat ’n opsie-popsie ka mer! Dit so groot dat ek nabykykers en teleslope nodig het om te sien wat aan die ander kant gebeur!”
Die lakeie dra die silwerskinkborde met eiers, spek, wors en gebraaide aartappels in.
Meneer Tibbs besef vir die eerste keer dat indien hy aan die vier meter hoë tafel wil bedien - en as hofmeester is dit sy plig - hy op ’n trapleer sal moet staan. En meer nog, hy sal ’n kolossale warm bord op sy een hand moet balanseer en ’n reusagtige koffiepot in die ander
moet vashou.
Enige normale mens sou weggeskram het van so ’n taak, maar hofmeesters deins nooit vir probleme terug nie. Boontoe klim hy, hoër en hoër, terwyl Sophie en die Koningin sy vordering aandagtig dophou. Dis selfs moontlik dat hulle heimlik hoop dat hy sy balans sal verloor en op die vloer sal beland! Maar goeie hofmeesters kom dit nooit oor nie.

Op die boonste sport van die leer staan meneer Tibbs soos ’n wafferse akrobaat, skink die GSR se koffie en plaas die enorme bord kos op die tafel voor hom. Op die bord lê agt eiers, twaalf vet worse, sestien stukke spek en ’n yslike hoop gebraaide aartappels.
“Wat dit, asseblief, Majestator?” vra die GSR en kyk beleef af na die Koningin.
“Hy het nog nooit in sy hele lewe iets anders as snor
kommers geëet nie,” verduidelik Sophie, “en hulle is walglik, glo my.”
“Dit lyk darem nie asof die snorkommers sy groei
enigsins belemmer het nie,” sê die Koningin.
Die GSR gryp die tuinvurk, skep die hele kaboedel in een haal op, en stop dit in sy tamaai mond. “Stiekela-gommel!” sê hy. “Die goed laat snorkommers na drob-beldrek proesel!”
Die Koningin kyk afkeurend na hom. Meneer Tibbs
se oë is op sy tone gerig en sy lippe roer in stille gebed. “Dit ’n piepelklein byt,” sê die GSR. “Daar nog van hierdie smeklekker gulseling in die kas, Majestator?” “Tibbs,” sê die Koningin met ware koninklike gas-vryheid, “laat haal nog twaalf eiers en twintig worse vir
die meneer.”
Meneer Tibbs gly uit die saal uit, mompel onpubli—
seerbare woorde en vee sy voorkop met ’n groot wit sakdoek af.
Die GSR lig die groot beker en sluk die koffie. “Au!
Siesa! Poef!” skree hy, en ’n groot mondvol beland op die vloer. “Asseblief, Majestator, wat hierdie viesaaklige goed wat ek drink?”
“Dis koffie,” antwoord die Koningin. “Vars gemaal—
de koffie.”
“Dis vergryslik!” sê hy. “Waar die bobbelbrou?” “Die wát?” vra die Koningin uit die veld geslaan. “Smekheerlike, bruisende bobbelbrou,” sê die GSR. “Almal moet bobbelbrou drink met ontbyt, Majestator. Dan kan ons almal saam wipvonke maak ná die tyd.” “Wat op aarde bedoel hy?” vra die Koningin.
Sophie verroer nie ’n spiertjie nie, al wil sy uitbars van die lag. “GSR!” sê sy streng. “Hier is geen bobbel brou nie en wipvonke is ten strengste verbode.”
“Wat?” roep die GSR opgewonde uit. “Geen bob belbrou? Geen wipvonke? Geen luidwellende musiek? Geen boem-boem-bam?”
“Beslis nie!” sê Sophie.
“As hy wil sing, laat hy dit tog maar doen,” sê die
Koningin.
“Hy wil nie sing nie,” sê Sophie.
“Hy het tog gesê hy wil musiek maak,” hou die Ko ningin vol. “Sal ek ’n vioolspeler laat haal om hom te begelei?”
“Nee, U Majesteit,” sê Sophie, “hy maak maar ’n grappie.”

’n Ondeunde glimlag speel om die GSR se mond. “Luister,” sê hy, “as hulle nie in die paleis bobbelbrou het, kan ek nog altyd wipvonke maak as ek hard genoeg perbeer!”
“Nee,” sê Sophie benoud. “Nee, ek smeek jou, moe-nie!”
“Musiek is baie goed vir die spysvertering,” verseker die Koningin haar. “As ek in Skotland is, speel hulle altyd die doedelsakke buite die venster terwyl ek eet. Speel asseblief iets!” sê sy vir die GSR.
“Ek het Majestator se verlof,” sê die GSR, en skielik
laat hy ’n wipvonk los wat soos ’n bom ontplof.
Die Koningin wip soos sy skrik.
“Joegaai!” skree die GSR uitgelate. “Dit ’n entstof bcter as doedelsakke, nê, Majestator?”
Dit neem die Koningin ’n hele paar sekondes om tot
verhaal te kom. “Ek verkies doedelsakke,” sê sy, maar sy kan nie help om te glimlag nie.
Gedurende die volgende twintig minute word ’n hele span lakeie besig gehou met die aandra van ’n derde en
’n vierde en ’n vyfde porsie kos vir die lekkerbekkige
GSR.
Toe hy sy twee-en-sewentigste eier verorber het, sluip meneer Tibbs die saal binne. Hy gaan staan by die Koningin, buig laag af en fluister in haar oor. “Die sjef vra verskoning, mevrou, maar hy sê daar is nie meer eiers in die spens nie.”
“Wat makeer die henne?” vra die Koningin.
“Die henne makeer niks nie,” fluister meneer Tibbs.
“Sê hulle dan aan om nog eiers te lê,” beveel die Ko ningin. Sy kyk op na die GSR. “Eet maar solank roosterbrood en marmelade terwyl jy wag,” sê sy.
“Die roosterbrood is op,” sê meneer Tibbs, “en die sjef sê daar is nie meer ’n krieseltjie brood nie.”
“Dan moet hy nog bak,” sê die Koningin.
Tussendeur vertel Sophie die Koningin van haar ondervindings in Reuseland. Die Koningin is verstom en verslae. Toe Sophie klaar is, draai sy weer na die GSR, wat nou groot hompe sponskoek eet.
“Groot Sagmoedige Reus,” sê sy, “vannag het daar
die mensvretende gedrogte Engeland besoek. Kan jy onthou waar hulle die vorige nag was?”
Die GSR sit ’n hele sponskoek in sy mond en terwyl
hy kou, dink hy. “Ja, Majestator,” sê hy uiteindelik, “ek dink ek onthou. Hulle galop na Swede vir Sweedse leerderige proesel.”
“Gaan haal ’n telefoon,” sê die Koningin.
Meneer Tibbs plaas ’n telefoon langs haar op die tafel. Die Koningin tel die gehoorbuis op. “Ek wil met die Koning van Swede praat,” sê sy vir die persoon by die skakelbord.

“Goeiemóre,” sê die Koningin. “Gaan dit goed daar
by julle in Swede?”
“Vrot!” antwoord die Koning van Swede. “Daar heers groot paniek in die hoofstad. Eergisternag het ses-en-twintig van my getrouste onderdane net eenvoudig verdwyn. Die hele land is vreesbevange.”
“Jou ses-en-twintig onderdane is deur reuse opge—
eet,” sê die Koningin. “Blykbaar hou hulle van die smaak van Swede.”
“Hoekom hou hulle van die smaak van Swede?”
“Want die Swede het glo ’n leerderige smaak. Ten minste, so sê die Groot Sagmoedige Reus.”
“Ek weet nie wáárvan jy praat nie,” sê die ontstelde
Koning. “Dis nie ’n grap as mens se getroue onderdane soos springmielies wegwip nie.”
“Hulle het van my onderdane ook geëet,” sê die Koningin.
“Wie is die húlle van wie jy praat?” vra die Koning, wat nou ongeduldig raak.
“Reuse,” antwoord die Koningin.
“Luister, Elizabeth,” sê die Koning, “voel jy nie dalk sleg nie?”
“Ek het ’n moeilike tydjie agter die rug,” erken die Koningin. “Vir eers het ek ’n afgryslike nagmerrie ge-had, toe het die kamerbediende my ontbyt-skinkbord laat val, en op die oomblik sit ’n reus op my klavier.”
“Bel dadelik ’n dokter,” sê die Koning van Swede besorg. “Jy het regtig een dringend nodig!”
“Nee, ek sal regkom,” antwoord die Koningin. “Dankie vir jou hulp,” en sy sit die gehoorbuis op die mikkie terug.
“Ek wil net eers absolute sekerheid oor die saak hê voordat ek die troepe oproep,” sê sy. Weer kyk sy op na die GSR. Hy eet nou oliebolle en skoffel hulle tien op ’n slag soos ertjies in sy mond.
“Dink mooi, GSR,” sê sy, “waar was daardie aaklige reuse drié nagte gelede?”
Die GSR dink diep.
“Ha!” sê hy ná ’n rukkie. “Ek onthou.” “Waar?” vra die Koningin.
“Maputo,” sê die GSR. “Toe hulle verby my grot draf, het Hompvleisvreter geskree: ‘Ek galop na Mapu to om ma Puto en pa Puto en al tien klein Puto’s op te gopsel.”
Dadelik tel die Koningin die telefoon op. “Kry vir my die belangrikste persoon in Maputo,” sê sy. “As dit nie die President is nie, dan wie ook al in bevel is.”
Binne vyf minute sê ’n stem: “Die Burgemeester van
Maputo hier!”
“Luister, meneer Burgemeester,” sê die Koningin, “het enigiets onaangenaams drie nagte gelede in julle stad gebeur?”
“Elke nag gebeur daar onaangename dinge in die

stad," antwoord die Burgemeester. "Ons kap koppe af soos julle pietersielie opkap."
"Ek het nog nooit in my lewe pietersielie opgekap
nie," sê die Koningin. "Maar wat ek eintlik wil weet is, het enigiemand onlangs in Maputo verdwýn?"
"Ja, my oom en sy vrou," sê die Burgemeester dadelik. "Hy het drie nagte gelede sommer net verdwyn uit sy bed. Sy vrou ook én hulle tien kinders."
"Daar jy dit het!" sê die GSR, wie se wonderbaarlike ore hom in staat gestel het om die hele gesprek op die telefoon te volg. "Dis Hompvleisvreter darie. Hy't mos gesê hy gaan ma Puto en pa Puto en al tien die klein Puto's opgopsel."
Die Koningin sit die gehoorbuis terug. "Nou weet ek
verseker. Dis alles wáár wat julle my vertel het." En vir meneer Tibbs beveel sy: "Laat roep onmiddellik die Hoof van die Leër en die Hoof van die Lugmag."

21. THE PLAN

The Head of the Army and the Head of the Air Force stood at attention beside the Queen's breakfast table. Sophie was still in her seat and the BFG was still high up on his crazy perch.

It took the Queen only five minutes to explain the situation to the military men.

'I knew there was something like this going on, Your Majesty,' the Head of the Army said. 'For the last ten years we have been getting reports from nearly every country in the world about people disappearing mysteriously in the night. We had one only the other day from Panama …'

'For the hatty taste!' cried the BFG.

'And one from Wellington, in New Zealand,' said the Head of the Army.

'For the booty flavour!' cried the BFG.

'What is he talking about?' said the Head of the Air Force.

'Work it out for yourself,' the Queen said. 'What time is it? Ten a.m. In eight hours those nine blood-thirsty brutes will be galloping off to gobble up another couple of dozen unfortunate wretches. They have to be stopped. We must act fast.'

'We'll bomb the blighters!' shouted the Head of the Air Force.

'We'll mow them down with machine-guns!' cried the Head of the Army.

'I do not approve of murder,' the Queen said.

'But they are murderers themselves!' cried the Head of the Army.

'That is no reason why we should follow their example,' the Queen said. 'Two wrongs don't make a right.'

'And two rights don't make a left!' cried the BFG.

'We must bring them back alive,' the Queen said.

'How?' the two military men said together. 'They are all fifty feet high. They'd knock us down like ninepins!'

'Wait!' cried the BFG. 'Hold your horseflies! Keep your skirts on! I think I has the answer to the maiden's hair!'

'Let him speak,' the Queen said.

'Every afternoon,' the BFG said, 'all these giants is in the Land of Noddy.'

'I can't understand a word this feller says,' the Head of the Army snapped. 'Why doesn't he speak clearly?'

'He means the Land of Nod,' Sophie said. 'It's pretty obvious.'

'Exunckly!' cried the BFG. 'Every afternoon all these nine giants is lying on the ground snoozling away in a very deep sleep. They is

always resting like that before they is galloping off to guzzle another helping of human beans.'
'Go on,' they said. 'So what?'
'So what you soldiers has to do is to creep up to the giants while they is still in the Land of Noddy and tie their arms and legs with mighty ropes and whunking chains.'
'Brilliant,' the Queen said.
'That's all very well,' said the Head of the Army. 'But how do we get the brutes back here? We can't load fifty-foot giants on to trucks! Shoot 'em on the spot, that's what I say!'
The BFG looked down from his lofty perch and said, this time to the Head of the Air Force, 'You is having bellypoppers, is you not?'
'Is he being rude?' the Head of the Air Force said.
'He means helicopters,' Sophie told him.
'Then why doesn't he say so? Of course we have helicopters.'
'Whoppsy big bellypoppers?' asked the BFG.
'Very big ones,' the Head of the Air Force said proudly. 'But no helicopter is big enough to get a giant like that inside it.'
'You do not put him inside,' the BFG said. 'You sling him underneath the belly of your bellypopper and carry him like a porteedo.'
'Like a what?' said the Head of the Air Force.
'Like a torpedo,' Sophie said.
'Could you do that, Air Marshal?' the Queen asked.
'Well, I suppose we could,' the Head of the Air Force admitted grudgingly.
'Then get cracking!' the Queen said, 'You'll need nine helicopters, one for each Giant.'
'Where is this place?' the Air Force man said to the BFG. 'I presume you can pinpoint it on the map?'
'Pinpoint?' said the BFG. 'Map? I is never hearing these words before. Is this Air Force bean talking slushbungle?'
The Air Marshal's face turned the colour of a ripe plum. He was not used to being told he was talking slushbungle. The Queen, with her usual admirable tact and good sense, came to the rescue. 'BFG,' she said, 'can you tell us more or less where this Giant Country is?'
'No, Majester,' the BFG said. 'Not on my nelly.'
'Then we're jiggered!' cried the Army General.
'This is ridiculous!' cried the Air Marshal.
'You must not be giving up so easy,' the BFG said calmly. 'The first titchy bobsticle you meet and you begin shouting you is biffsquiggled.'
The Army General was no more used to being insulted than the Air Marshal. His face began to swell with fury and his cheeks blew out until they looked like two huge ripe tomatoes. 'Your Majesty!' he cried. 'We are dealing with a lunatic! I want nothing more to do with

this ridiculous operation!'
The Queen, who was used to the tantrums of her senior officials, ignored him completely. 'BFG,' she said, 'Would you please tell these rather dim-witted characters exactly what to do.'
'A pleasure, Majester,' said the BFG. 'Now listen to me carefully, you two bootbogglers.'
The military men began to twitch, but they stayed put.
'I is not having the foggiest idea where Giant Country is in the world,' the BFG said, 'but I is always able to gallop there. I is galloping forthwards and backwards from Giant Country every night to blow my dreams into little chiddler's bedrooms. I is knowing the way very well. So all you is having to do is this. Put your nine big bellyhoppers up in the air and let them follow me as I is galloping along.'
'How long will the journey take?' the Queen asked.
'If we is leaving now,' the BFG said, 'we will be arriving just as the giants is having their afternoon snozzle.'
'Splendid,' said the Queen. Then turning to the two military men, she said, 'Prepare to leave immediately.'
The Head of the Army, who was feeling pretty miffed by the whole business, said, 'That's all very well, Your Majesty, but what are we going to do with the blighters once we've got them back?'
'Don't you worry about that,' the Queen told him. 'We'll be ready for them. Hurry up, now! Off you go!'
'If it pleases Your Majesty,' Sophie said, 'I should like to ride with the BFG, to keep him company.'
'Where will you sit?' asked the Queen.
'In his ear,' Sophie said. 'Show them, BFG.'
The BFG got down from his high chair. He picked Sophie up in his fingers. He swivelled his huge right ear until it was parallel with the ground, then he placed Sophie gently inside it.
The Heads of the Army and the Air Force stood there goggling. The Queen smiled. 'You really are rather a wonderful giant,' she said.
'Majester,' the BFG said, 'I is wishing to ask a very special thing from you.'
'What is it?' the Queen said.
'Could I please bring back here in the bellypoppers all my collection of dreams? They is taking me years and years to collect and I is not wanting to lose them.'
'Why of course,' the Queen said. 'I wish you a safe journey.'
21. Die Plan (Operasie Reuse-jag)
Die Hoof van die Leër en die Hoof van die Lugmag staan op aandag langs die Koningin se ontbyttafel. Sophie sit ewe gedwee op haar stoel, terwyl die Groot Sagmoedige Reus op sy gekke sitplek bokant hulle al mal uittroon.

Dit het die Koningin presies vyf minute geneem om
die weermagmanne op die hoogte van sake te bring.
"Ek het gewéét daar is iets aan die gang, U Majes teit," sê die Hoof van die Leer. "Ons kry al die afgelo-pe tien jaar van regoor die wêreld verslae van mense wat op geheimsinnige wyse gedurende die nag verdwyn. Net nou die dag het ons 'n verslag uit Afrika gekry."
"Dit vir die beeste-proesel," sê die GSR dadelik. "En van Wenen, Oostenryk."
"Dit vir die worsieproesel," sê die GSR.
"Wat op aarde bedoel die kêrel?" vra die Hoof van die Lugmag ongeduldig.
"Los die raaisel maar self op," sê die Koningin.
"Hoe laat is dit? Tien voormiddag. Oor agt uur sal daardie nege bloeddorstige monsters op pad wees om nog 'n paar dosyn ongelukkige mense te verorber. Ons móét hulle keer. Ons moet vinnig optree."
"Ons sal die skarminkels bombardeer!" roep die Hoof
van die Lugmag uit.
"Ons sal hulle afmaai met masjiengewere!" skree die
Hoof van die Leër.
"Ek keur moord hoegenaamd nie goed nie," sê die
Koningin streng.
"Maar hulle is dan self moordenaars!" roep die Hoof van die Leër uit.
"Dis nog geen rede waarom ons hulle voorbeeld moet
volg nie," sê die Koningin. "Julle moet hulle lewend terugbring," beveel sy.
"Hoe?" vra die twee mans tegelyk. "Hulle is goed sewentien meter lank; en daar is nege van hulle. Hulle sal ons soos kegels omtik."
"Wag bietjie-ietsie," sê die GSR. "Stadig oor die
stene! Moenie op lol gaan. Ek dink ek weet wat te danig."
"Gee hom kans," sê die Koningin.
"Elke middag," vervolg die GSR, "al die reuse in gaapland."
"Ek verstaan die kêrel glad nie," sê die Hoof van die
Leër. "Hoekom sê hy nie wat hy bedoel nie?"
"Hy bedoel natuurlik droomland. Hulle slaap," sê die
Koningin. "Dis redelik verstaanbaar."
"So net, Majestator! My Kroon slaan die kop op die spyker! Elke middag lê die nege reuse op die grond en snorkel weg in diep slaap. Hulle rus altyd goed voor hulle weggalop om pensopstoppers te soek."
"So, wat daarvan?" sê die Hoof van die Leër.
"So, die dolsate moet wegkruip na reuse terwyl hulle nog in gaapland, en hulle arms vasmaak met sterk toue en klemmende kettings."
"Briljant," sê die Koningin.
"Dis alles goed en wel, U Majesteit," sê die Hoof van die Leër, "maar

hoe kry ons die monsters hier? Ons kan tog nie die nege reuse op trokke laai nie! Skiet hulle op die plek dood, dis wat ék sê!”
Die GSR kyk van sy hoë sitplek op hulle af en vra
die Hoof van die Lugmag: “Het julle nie pelliehopters?”
“Probeer hy dalk onbeskof wees?” vra die Hoof van die Lugmag.
“Hy bedoel helikopters,” verduidelik Sophie.
“Nou hoekom sê hy nie so nie! Natúúrlik het ons helikopters.”
“Fantastieke groot pelliehopters?” vra die GSR.
“Báie groot helikopters,” antwoord die Hoof van die Lugmag. “Maar geen helikopter is groot genoeg om ’n reus van daardie grootte in te laai nie!”
“Jy sit horn nie binne,” verduidelik die GSR. “Jy maak hom onder pelliehopter vas soos portedo.”
“Soos wát?” vra die Hoof van die Lugmag. “Soos ’n torpedo,” verduidelik Sophie.
“Kan u dit doen, Lugmaarskalk?” vra die Koningin. “Ja, U Majesteit, ek reken ons kan,” sê die Hoof van
die Lugmag teësinnig.
“Spring dan aan die werk!” beveel die Koningin. “Daar moet nege helikopters wees - een vir elke reus.”
“Waar is hierdie plek - dié Reuseland?” vra die Hoof van die Lugmag. “Kan iemand dit op ’n wêreldkaart aandui?”
“Pêrelkaart?” vra die GSR. “Ek hoor nog nooit eergister daardie woord! Maak hierdie lugman grapperasies?”
Die Hoof van die Lugmag word pers van woede. Hy
is nie gewoond daaraan dat mense so met hom praat nie. Die Koningin, met haar gewone bewonderenswaar-dige takt en gesonde verstand, kom hulle tot hulp.
“GSR, kan jy nie vir ons min of meer sê waar hierdie
Reuseland is nie?”
“Nee, Majestator,” antwoord die GSR. “Onbemoontlik.”
“Dan is ons planne gcfnuik,” sê die Hoof van die
Leer.
“Dis onsinnig!” sê die Hoof van die Lugmag.
“Julie moenie so gou moue oprol!” betig die GSR hulle. “By die eerste hindering wat kom, skree julle soos maermerries!”
Die Hoof van die Leër (soos die Hoof van die Lug
mag) is nie gewoond aan sulke astrantheid nie. Sy gesig swel van woede en sy wange pof uit sodat hulle soos twee groot tamaties lyk. “U Majesteit,” sê hy, “ons het hier met ’n mal man te make. Ek onttrek my van hier die onsinnige operasie!”
Die Koningin, wat al gewoond is aan hulle oordrewe fyngevoeligheid, ignoreer hom. “GSR,” sê sy, “sal jy asseblief vir hierdie verbeeldinglose man presiés sê wat om te doen?”

“Plesierig, Majestator,” sê die GSR. “Luister mooi,
julle stewelvrekkers.”
Die twee mans is hoogs ontstoke, maar hulle luister. “Ek het nie vaagste verskil waar Reuseland lê in pê-
rel,” sê die GSR, “maar ek ken pad soontoe. Ek galop
soonweg en soontoe elke dag om my drome te blaas in klein kidderen se kamers. Sit julle nege pelliehopters in die lug en volg my galop.”
“Hoe lank sal die reis duur?” vra die Koningin.
“As ons nóú aftrek,” sê die GSR, “kom ons daar as hulle middagsnorkel.”
“Uitstekend!” sê die Koningin. Sy draai na die twee mans en beveel: “Maak gereed om dadelik te vertrek.”
Die Hoof van die Leer, wat hom nogal vervies het,
sê: “Dis alles goed en wel, U Majesteit, maar wat gaan ons met die gedrogte maak as ons hulle hierheen gebring het?”
“Moet julle nie daaroor bekommer nie,” sê die Ko
ningin vol vertroue. “Ons sal alles hier in gereedheid hê om hulle te ontvang. Maak nou gou! Weg is julle!”
’n Klein stemmetjie piep: “As ek mag, U Majesteit,
sal ek graag saam met die GSR gaan om hom geselskap te hou.”
“Maar waar gaan jy sit?” vra die Koningin.
“In sy oor,” sê Sophie. “Wys vir hulle, GSR.”
Die GSR klim van sy hoë stoel af. Hy tel vir Sophie versigtig tussen twee vingers op. Hy draai sy een wonderbaarlike oor sodat dit parallel met die vloer is en sit Sophie netjies daarin.
Die Hoof van die Leer en die Hoof van die Lugmag
se oë val byna uit hulle koppe van verbasing.
“Majestator,” sê die GSR, “ek vra baie spesinjale ding van jou.”
“Wat is dit?”
“Kan ek asseblief my drome in pelliehopters saam terugbring? Dit het jaartse en jaartse geneem om hulle te vang.”
“Natuurlik!” antwoord die Koningin. “Ek hoop julle
het almal ’n veilige reis.”
22. THE CAPTURE.
The BFG had made thousands of journeys to and from Giant Country over the years, but he had never in his life made one quite like this, with nine huge helicopters roaring along just over his head. He had never before travelled in broad daylight either. He hadn’t dared to. But this was different. Now he was doing it for the Queen of England herself and he was frightened of nobody.
As he galloped across the British Isles with the helicopters thundering above him, people stood and gaped and wondered what on earth was going on. They had never seen the likes of it before. And they never would again.

Every now and then, the pilots of the helicopters would catch a glimpse of a small girl wearing glasses crouching in the giant's right ear and waving to them. They always waved back. The pilots marvelled at the giant's speed and at the way he leapt across wide rivers and over huge houses.
But they hadn't seen anything yet.
'Be careful to hang on tight!' the BFG said. 'We is going fast as a fizzlecrump!' The BFG changed into his famous top gear and all at once he began to fly forward as though there were springs in his legs and rockets in his toes. He went skimming over the earth like some magical hop-skip-and-jumper with his
feet hardly ever touching the ground. As usual, Sophie had to crouch low in the crevice of his ear to save herself from being swept clean away.
The nine pilots in their helicopters suddenly realized they were being left behind. The giant was streaking ahead. They opened their throttles to full speed, and even then they were only just able to keep up.
In the leading machine, the Head of the Air Force was sitting beside the pilot. He had a world atlas on his knees and he kept staring first at the atlas, then at the ground below, trying to figure out where they were going. Frantically he turned the pages of the atlas. 'Where the devil are we going?' he cried.
'I haven't the foggiest idea,' the pilot answered. 'The Queen's orders were to follow the giant and that's exactly what I'm doing.'
The pilot was a young Air Force officer with a bushy moustache. He was very proud of his moustache. He was also quite fearless and he loved adventure. He thought this was a super adventure. 'It's fun going to new places,' he said.
'New places!' shouted the Head of the Air Force. 'What the blazes d'you mean new places?'
'This place we're flying over now isn't in the atlas, is it?' the pilot said, grinning.
'You're darn right it isn't in the atlas!' cried the Head of the Air Force. 'We've flown clear off the last page!'
'I expect that old giant knows where he's going,' the young pilot said.
'He's leading us to disaster!' cried the Head of the Air Force. He was shaking with fear. In the seat behind him sat the Head of the Army who was even more terrified.
'You don't mean to tell me we've gone right out of the atlas?' he cried, leaning forward to look.
'That's exactly what I amtelling you!' cried the Air Force man. 'Look for yourself. Here's the very last map in the whole flaming atlas! We went off that over an hour ago!' He turned the page. As in all atlases,

there were two completely blank pages at the very end. 'So now we must be somewhere here,' he said, putting a finger on one of the blank pages.

'Where's here?' cried the Head of the Army.

The young pilot was still grinning broadly. He said to them, 'That's why they always put two blank pages at the back of the atlas. They're for new countries. You're meant to fill them in yourself.'

The Head of the Air Force glanced down at the ground below. 'Just look at this godforsaken desert!' he cried. 'All the trees are dead and all the rocks are blue!'

'The giant has stopped,' the young pilot said. 'He's waving us down.'

The pilots throttled back the engines and all nine helicopters landed safely on the great yellow wasteland. Then each of them lowered a ramp from its belly. Nine jeeps, one from each helicopter, were driven down the ramps. Each jeep contained six soldiers and a vast quantity of thick rope and heavy chains.

'I don't see any giants,' the Head of the Army said.

'The giants is all just out of sight over there,' the BFG told him. 'But if you is taking these sloshbuckling noisy bellypoppers any closer, all the giants is waking up at once and then pop goes the weasel.'

'So you want us to proceed by jeep?' the Head of the Army said.

'Yes,' the BFG said. 'But you must all be very very hushy quiet. No roaring of motors. No shouting. No mucking about. No piggery-jokery.'

The BFG, with Sophie still in his ear, trotted forward and the jeeps followed close behind.

Suddenly the most dreadful rumbling noise was heard by everyone. The Head of the Army went pea-green in the face. 'Those are guns!' he cried. 'There is a battle raging somewhere up ahead of us! Turn back, the lot of you! Let's get out of here!'

'Pigspiffle!' the BFG said. 'Those noises is not guns.'

'Of course they're guns!' shouted the Head of the Army. 'I am a military man and I know a gun when I hear one! Turn back!'

'Those is just the giants snortling in their sleep,' the BFG said. 'I is a giant myself and I know a giant's snortle when I is hearing one.'

'Are you quite sure?' the Army man said anxiously.

'Positive,' the BFG said.

'Proceed cautiously,' the Army man ordered.

They all moved on.

Then they saw them!

Even at a distance, they were enough to scare the daylights out of the soldiers. But when they got close and saw what the giants really looked like, they began to sweat with fear. Nine fearsome, ugly, half-naked, fifty-feet-long brutes lay sprawled over the ground in various

grotesque attitudes of sleep, and the sound of their snoring was indeed like gunfire in a battle.

The BFG raised a hand. The jeeps all stopped. The soldiers got out.

'What happens if one of them wakes up?' whispered the Head of the Army, his knees knocking together from fear.

'If any one of them is waking up, he will gobble you down before you can say knack jife,' the BFG answered, grinning hugely. 'Me is the only one what won't be gobbled up because giants is never eating giants. Me and Sophie is the only safe ones because I is hiding her if that happens.'

The Head of the Army took several paces to the rear. So did the Head of the Air Force. They climbed rather quickly back into their jeep, ready to make a fast getaway if necessary. 'Go forward, men!' the Head of the Army said. 'Go forward and do your duty bravely!'

The soldiers crept forward with their ropes and chains. All of them were trembling mightily. None dared speak a word.

The BFG, with Sophie now sitting on the palm of his hand, stood near by watching the operation.

To give the soldiers their due, they were extremely courageous. There were six well-trained efficient men working on each giant and within ten minutes eight out of the nine giants had been trussed up like chickens and were still snoring contentedly. The ninth, who happened to be the Fleshlumpeater, was causing trouble for the soldiers because he was lying with his right arm tucked underneath his enormous body. It was impossible to tie his wrists and arms together without first getting that arm out from underneath him.

Very very cautiously, the six soldiers who were working on the Fleshlumpeater began to pull at the huge arm, trying to release it. The Fleshlumpeater opened his tiny piggy black eyes.

'Which of you foulpesters is wiggling my arm?' he bellowed. 'Is that you, you rotsome Manhugger?'

Suddenly he saw the soldiers. In a flash, he was sitting up. He looked around him. He saw more soldiers. With a roar, he leapt to his feet. The soldiers, petrified with fear, froze where they were. They had no weapons with them. The Head of the Army put his jeep into reverse.

'Human beans!' the Flushlumpeater yelled. 'What is all you flushbunking rotsome half-baked beans doing in our country?' He made a grab at a soldier and swept him up in his hand.

'I is having early suppers today!' he shouted, holding the poor squirming soldier at arm's length and roaring with laughter.

Sophie, standing on the palm of the BFG's hand, was watching horrorstruck. 'Do something!' she cried. 'Quick, before he eats him!'

'Put that human bean down!' the BFG shouted.

The Fleshlumpeater turned and stared at the BFG. 'What is you doing

here with all these grotty twiglets!' he bellowed. 'You is making me very suspichy!'
The BFG made a rush at the Fleshlumpeater, but the colossal fifty-four-foot-high giant simply knocked him over with a flick of his free arm. At the same time, Sophie fell off the BFG's palm on to the ground.
Her mind was racing. She must do something! She must! She must! She remembered the sapphire brooch the Queen had pinned on to her chest. Quickly, she undid it.
'I is guzzling you nice and slow!' the Fleshlumpeater was saying to the soldier in his hand. 'Then I is guzzling ten or twenty more of you midgy little maggots down there! You is not getting away from me because I is galloping fifty times faster than you!'
Sophie ran up behind the Fleshlumpeater. She was holding the brooch between her fingers. When she was right up close to the great naked hairy legs, she rammed the three-inch long pin of the brooch as hard as she could into the Fleshlumpeater's right ankle. It went deep into the flesh and stayed there.
The giant gave a roar of pain and jumped high in the air. He dropped the soldier and made a grab for his ankle.
The BFG, knowing what a coward the Fleshlumpeater was, saw his chance. 'You is bitten by a snake!' he shouted. 'I seed it biting you! It was a frightsome poisnowse viper! It was a dreadly dungerous vindscreen viper!'
'Save our souls!' bellowed the Fleshlumpeater. 'Sound the crumpets! I is bitten by a septicous venomsome vindscreen viper!' He flopped to the ground and sat there howling his head off and clutching his ankle with both hands. His fingers felt the brooch. 'The teeth of the dreadly viper is still sticking into me!' he yelled. 'I is feeling the teeth sticking into my anklet!'
The BFG saw his second chance. 'We must be getting those viper's teeth out at once!' he cried. 'Otherwise you is deader than duck-soup! I is helping you!'
The BFG knelt down beside the Fleshlumpeater. 'You must grab your anklet very tight with both hands!' he ordered. 'That will stop the poisnowse juices from the venomsome viper going up your leg and into your heart!'
The Fleshlumpeater grabbed his ankle with both hands.
'Now close your eyes and grittle your teeth and look up to heaven and say your prayers while I is taking out the teeth of the venomsome viper,' the BFG said.
The terrified Fleshlumpeater did exactly as he was told.
The BFG signalled for some rope. A soldier rushed it over to him. With both the Fleshlumpeater's hands gripping his ankle, it was a simple

matter for the BFG to tie the ankles and hands together with a tight knot.
'I is pulling out the frightsome viper's teeth!' the BFG said as he pulled the knot tight.
'Do it quickly!' shouted the Fleshlumpeater, 'before I is pizzened to death!'
'There we is,' said the BFG, standing up. 'You can look now.'
When the Fleshlumpeater saw that he was trussed up like a turkey, he gave a yell so loud that the heavens trembled. He rolled and he wriggled, he fought and he figgled, he squirmed and he squiggled. But there was not a thing he could do.
'Well done you!' Sophie cried.
'Well done you!' said the BFG, smiling down at the little girl. 'You is saving all of our lives!'
'Will you please get that brooch back for me,' Sophie said. 'It belongs to the Queen.'
The BFG pulled the beautiful brooch out of the Fleshlumpeater's ankle. The Fleshlumpeater howled. The BFG wiped the pin and handed it back to Sophie.
Curiously, not one of the other eight snoring giants had woken up during this shimozzle. 'When you is only sleeping one or two hours a day, you is sleeping extra doubly deep,' the BFG explained.
The Heads of the Army and the Air Force drove forward once again in their jeep. 'Her Majesty will be very pleased with me,' the Head of the Army said. 'I shall probably get a medal. What's the next move?'
'Now you is all driving over to my cave to load up my bottles of dreams,' the BFG said.
'We can't waste time with that rubbish,' the Army General said.
'It is the Queen's order,' Sophie said. She was now back on the BFG's hand.
So the nine jeeps drove across to the BFG's cave and the great dream-loading operation began. There were fifty-thousand jars in all to be loaded up, more than five thousand to each jeep, and it took over an hour to finish the job.
While the soldiers were loading the dreams, the BFG and Sophie disappeared over the mountains on a mysterious errand. When they came back, the BFG had a sack the size of a small house slung over his shoulder.
'What's that you've got in there?' the Head of the Army demanded to know.
'Curiosity is killing the rat,' the BFG said, and he turned away from the silly man.
When he was sure that all his precious dreams had been safely loaded on to the jeeps, the BFG said, 'Now we is driving back to the

bellypoppers and picking up the frightsome giants.'
The jeeps drove back to the helicopters. The fifty thousand dreams were carried carefully, jar by jar, on to the helicopters. The soldiers climbed back on board, but the BFG and Sophie stayed on the ground. Then they all returned to where the nine giants were lying.
It was a fine sight to see them, these great air machines hovering over the trussed-up giants. It was an even finer sight to see the giants being woken up by the terrific thundering of the engines overhead, and the finest sight of all was to observe those nine hideous brutes squirming and twisting about on the ground like a mass of mighty snakes as they tried to free themselves from their ropes and chains.
'I is flushbunkled!' roared the Fleshlumpeater.
'I is splitzwiggled!' yelled the Childchewer.
'I is swogswalloped!' bellowed the Bonecruncher.
'I is goosegruggled!' howled the Manhugger.
'I is gunzleswiped!' shouted the Meatdripper.
'I is fluckgungled!' screamed the Maidmasher.
'I is slopgroggled!' squawked the Gizzardgulper.
'I is crodsquinkled!' yowled the Bloodbottler.
'I is bopmuggered!' screeched the Butcher Boy.
The nine giant-carrying helicopters each chose a separate giant and hovered directly over him. Very strong steel hawsers with hooks on the ends of them were lowered from the front and rear of each helicopter. The BFG quickly secured the hooks to the giants' chains, one hook near the legs and the other near the arms. Then very slowly, the giants were winched up into the air, parallel with the ground. The giants roared and bellowed, but there was nothing they could do.
The BFG, with Sophie once more resting comfortably in his ear, set off at a gallop for England. The helicopters all banked around and followed after him.
It was an amazing spectacle, those nine helicopters winging through the sky, each with a trussed-up fifty-foot-long giant slung underneath it. The giants themselves must have found it an interesting experience. They never stopped bellowing, but their howls were drowned by the noise of the engines.
When it began to get dark, the helicopters switched on powerful searchlights and trained them on to the galloping giant so as to keep him in sight. They flew right through the night and arrived in England just as dawn was breaking.
22. Gevangeneming!
Die GSR het in die loop van jare duisende der duisende reise heen en weer na Reuseland onderneem, maar nog nooit een soos dié nie.
Nege helikopters vlieg bo sy kop. En anders as tevo-re, reis hy helder oordag. Vroeër sou hy dit nooit ge-waag het nie. Nou is dit anders.

Nou doen hy dit vir die Koningin van Engeland en hy is bang vir niemand nie.
Soos hy oor die Britse Eilande jaag, met die nege helikopters wat bo horn dreun, staan mense hulle oral en vergaap aan die vreemde gesig. So iets het hulle nog nooit aanskou nie. Hulle sal ook nooit weer nie.
Af en toe kry die helikoptervlieëniers ’n glimp van ’n klein dogtertjie met ’n groot staalraambril wat in die reus se oor sit en vrolik waai. Hulle waai geesdriftig te-rug. Hulle verwonder hulle aan die spoed waarmee die reus beweeg en die wyse waarop hy oor hoë huise en breë riviere tree.
Min weet hulle dat dit nog niks is nie!
“Hou styf vas,” waarsku die reus vir Sophie. “Ons gaan nou warrel-dwarrel.” Hy gaan weer in hoogste versnelling in en vlieg vorentoe asof daar vere in sy bene en vuurpyle aan sy voete is. Hy skarrel oor die aarde soos ’n wafferse verspringer wie se voete net hier en daar grond raak. Soos tevore kruip Sophie diep in die voue van die oor sodat sy nie wegwaai nie.
Die nege vlieëniers besef skielik dat hulle agter raak. Die reus pyl voor hulle uit. Hulle versnel en vlieg so vinnig as hulle kan, en bly net-net by.
In die voorste helikopter sit die Hoof van die Lug
mag langs die vlieënier.
Daar is ’n wêreldkaart op sy skoot en hy probeer naarstiglik vasstel waar hulle is. Hy blaai moedeloos deur die atlas. “Waar de duiwel is ons nou?” vra hy.
“Nugter weet,” antwoord die vlieënier. “Die Konin gin se bevel is: volg die GSR, en dis presies wat ek doen.”
Die vlieënier is ’n jong lugmagoffisier met ’n vet snor waarop hy baie trots is. Hy is heeltemal vreesloos en alte lief vir avonture. Hierdie opdrag vind hy baie op-windend. “Dis vir my altyd ’n uitdaging om nuwe plek-ke te verken,” sê hy.
“Nuwe plekke!” skree die Hoof van die Lugmag.
“Nuzue plekkel Wat de ongeluk bedoel jy met nuwe plekke\”
“Die streek waaroor ons op die oomblik vlieg, is tog nie in die atlas nie, is dit?” vra die vlieënier en grinnik.
“Jy’s vervlaks reg!” roep die Hoof van die Lugmag uit. “Ons het so pas van die laaste bladsy afgevlieg!”
“Ek veronderstel dat die ou reus darem weet waarheen hy gaan,” sê die jong vlieënier.
“Hy lei ons na die verderf!” skree die Hoof van die Lugmag. Hy is vreesbevange. Agter hom sit die Hoof van die Leër. Hy is selfs nog banger.
“Wil jy my regtig sê ons het skoon uit die atlas gevlieg?” roep hy uit en leun vorentoe.

“Dis presies wat ek gesê het,” skree die Hoof van die Lugmag. “Kyk self. Hier is die heel laaste bladsy van die atlas. Ons het ’n uur gelede al daarvan af gevlieg.” Hy blaai om. Soos in die meeste atlasse, is daar twee skoon wit velle aan die einde van die boek. “Dus is ons nou hier êrens,” sê hy en druk met sy vinger op die een skoon vel.
“Waar is hier?” vra die Hoof van die Leer.
Die jong vlieënier grinnik nog steeds. Hy vind dit baie snaaks. “Dis hoekom daar twee skoon velle aan die einde is,” sê hy vir hulle. “Dis vir nuwe lande. ’n Mens vul dit self in.”
Die Hoof van die Lugmag kyk by die venster uit. “Onder ons is ’n godverlate woestyn,” sê hy. “Al die bome is dood, en oral lê daar blou rotsblokke.”
“Die Reus het gaan staan,” sê die vlieënier opgewonde. “Hy beduie dat ons moet land.”
Die vlieëniers verminder spoed en al nege helikopters gaan sit op die groot geel woestyn. Dan laat elke vlieë- nier ’n afryplank sak en nege Jeeps - een uit elke helikopterry uit. In elke Jeep is ses soldate en groot stapels dik tou en swaar ysterkettings.
“Ek sien g’n reuse nie,” sê die Hoof van die Leër. “Hulle lê alles daar annerkant,” sê die GSR. “Maar
as raserige pelliehopters verder gaan, word hulle per—
dalks wakker en dan dit klaar met bobbejaan.” “Moet ons dan met die Jeeps verder ry?”
“Ja,” sê die GSR, “maar almal so stil soos muisiekiekies wees. Geen krul van enjin, geen skree. Geen rond-slenter. Geen grapjas.”
Die GSR, met Sophie nog steeds in sy oor, drafstap voor. Die Jeeps streep agter hom aan.
Meteens hoor hulle ’n afgryslike, grommelende, rommelende geluid. Die Hoof van die Leër word rooi in die gesig. “Dis kanonne!” sê hy. “Daar voor ons is ’n bloe-dige veldslag aan die gang. Retireer! Retireer, manne! Laat ons hier wegkom!”
“Nonsnert!” sê die GSR. “Daardie geluid nie kanon
ne.”
“Natuurlik is dit kanonne,” stry die Hoof van die Leër. “Ek werk my lewe lank met kanonne. Ek ken ’n kanon se geraas as ek dit hoor! Terugval! Terugval, dadelik!”
“Dit net reussnorkels,” sê die GSR. “Ek self reus.
Ek ken reussnorkels.”
“Is jy hééltemal seker?” vra die Hoof van die Leër. “Poseblief!” sê die GSR.
“Beweeg dan versigtig en stil vorentoe!” beveel die
Hoof van die Leër.
En toe … toe gewaar hulle die reuse!
Selfs op so ’n afstand is hulle vreesaanjaend. Maar hoe nader die

soldate beweeg, hoe meer besef hulle hoe groot die reuse werklik is. Hulle begin sweet van vrees. Nege aaklige, harige, halfkaal sewentien meter lange monsters lê in verskillende groteske houdings uitgestrek op die grond. En hulle gesnork klink sowaar soos kanon-vuur!
Die GSR lig sy hand. Die Jeeps hou stil. Die soldate klim uit.
“Wat gebeur as een wakker word?” fluister die Hoof
van die Leër terwyl sy knieë teen mekaar kap.
“As een wakker word, gopsel hy julle almal op voor julle krankamakoeke sê,” grinnik die GSR. “Net nie vir my. Reuse gopsel nie ander reuse. Ek en Sophie veilig. Ek steek haar weg.”
Die Hoof van die Leër tree agteruit. Die Hoof van
die Lugmag ook. Hulle klim vinnig in ’n Jeep, gereed om vinnig die aftog te blaas as dit rtodig word. “Vorentoe, manskappe,” beveel die Hoof van die Leër. “Engeland verwag dat elke man sy plig sal doen!”
Die soldate kruip nader met die dik toue en ysterkettings. Hulle is almal baie bang. Niemand waag ’n woord nie.
Die GSR, met Sophie wat nou op die palm van sy
hand sit, staan naby genoeg om die gedoente fyn dop te
hou.
Ek moet toegee dat die soldate werklik baie dapper opgetree het. Vir elke reus was daar ses goed opgeleide soldate wat met groot bekwaamheid hulle werk gedoen het, en binne tien minute was agt van die reuse soos hoenders vasgebind.
Die negende een - die Hompvleisvreter - besorg hulle egter groot moeilikheid want hy lê met sy regterarm on-der sy reuse-liggaam. Dis dus onmoontlik om sy hande vas te bind sonder om eers daardie arm los te kry.
Baie, baie versigtig probeer die ses soldate wat vir hom verantwoordelik is, om die enorme arm onder hom uit te kry. Die Hompvleisvreter maak sy varkogies oop.
“Wat se vuilpester kielie my arm?” bulder hy. “Dit jy, vrotsame Manneklemmer?”
Dan sien hy die soldate. Soos blits sit hy regop. Hy kyk rond en sien nog soldate. Met ’n gebulk spring hy orent. Die soldate is so verskrik dat hulle hom aangaap. So iets het hulle nog nooit gesien nie. Hulle is magte-loos teen so ’n gedrog. Hulle het geen wapens by hulle nie! Die Hoof van die Leër sit die Jeep in trurat.
“Mensdommes!” skree die boosaardige Hompvleis vreter. “Wat maak julle vrotsame mensdommes in Reuse land?” Hy gryp na ’n soldaat en tel hom op. “Vandag gopsel ek vroeg snoepsels!” skree hy en lag bulderend terwyl hy die spartelende soldaat in die lug hou.
Sophie, wat op die GSR se hand staan, is met afgryse
vervul. “Doen iets!” skree sy vir die GSR. “Gou! Gou, voor hy hom opeet!”

“Sit darie mensdomme af!” skree die GSR.
Die Hompvleisvreter draai verbaas om en merk nou vir die eerste keer dat die GSR daar is.
“Wat maak jy met al diese vrotsame, vritsige kriewels?” bulder hy. Hy kyk met sy varkogies na die GSR. “Ek het susplisie jy het ons verkraai!” sê hy.
Die GSR bestorm hom, maar die Hompvleisvreter vee hom met sy los hand onderstebo. Met die val Sophie natuurlik van die GSR se hand af en beland op die grond. Sy besef dat sy nou blitsvinnig ’n plan sal moet maak om hulle te red.
“Ek verslobber jou kou-stadig, lekker snoepseltjie,” sê die Hompvleisvreter vir die soldaat. “Dan gopsel ek nog tien of twaalf van julle verfaaifomde muggies-luise daar onder. Julle sal nie wegkom! Ek galop vinniger! Vyftig male vinniger!”
Sophie hardloop na die Hompvleisvreter. Sy hou die saffierborsspeld wat die Koningin aan haar rok vasgespeld het, tussen haar duim en voorvinger. Toe sy by hom kom, by sy groot harige been, stamp sy die lang, dun speld so hard as sy kan in sy regterenkel. Dit steek diep in die vleis en bly daar sit.
Die reus brul van die pyn en wip in die lug op. Hy laat die soldaat val en gryp na sy enkel.
Die GSR, wat weet watter lafaard die Hompvleisvre ter is, gryp die kans aan. “Adderbroeisel pik jou!” skree hy. “Ek sien hom byt! Doodse giftong adderbroeisel!”
“Help my!” bulder die Hompvleisvreter. “Blaas die trompetter!” Hy plof op die grond neer, hou sy enkel
met albei hande styf vas en tjank. Sy vingers voel die borsspeld. “Die tand van vreesagtige adder steek nog in my!” skree hy. “Ek voel die tande byt in my enkeling!” Die GSR gryp die tweede kans aan. “Ons moet gou soos gister addertand uittrek,” beveel hy, “anders jy dooier as eiergeel. Ek help jou.”
Hy kniel langs die Hompvleisvreter. “Gryp jou enkeling baie styf met twee hande vas. Dit gifsouse keer van omkriewel na hart.”
Die Hompvleisvreter hou sy enkel met albei hande
styf vas.
“Maak oogkykers toe en byt tande en kyk op na sterre, dan trek ek gifaddertand uit,” sê die GSR.
Die verskrikte Hompvleisvreter doen presies soos hy
beveel word.
Die GSR beduie nou vir die soldate dat hulle die toue moet bring. Met dié dat die Hompvleisvreter albei hande om sy enkel het, is dit kinderspeletjies vir die GSR om die enkel en hande met ’n stywe knoop saam vas te bind.
“Ek trek gifaddertand uit - hy sit vas!” beloof die

GSR terwyl hy die knoop nog stywer trek.
"Gou-gou!" brul die Hompvleisvreter. "Voor ek verdwyn van giftand."
"So ja," sê die GSR tevrede, "nou jou oogkykers oopmaak."
Toe die Hompvleiseter besef dat hy soos 'n kalkoen
vasgebind is, bulk hy so hard dat die hemele bewe. Hy rol en beur en draai en spartel. Maar hy kry sy hande nie los nie.
"Mooi so! Mooi so!" sê Sophie opgewonde. "Knap
gedaan, GSR."
"Knap gedaan jý!" sê die GSR en glimlag. "Jy red al hulle lewers," en hy wys na die soldate wat dankbaar staan en toekyk.
"Gee asseblief tog net die borsspeld terug," sê
Sophie. "Dit behoort aan die Koningin."
Die GSR trek die borsspeld uit die Hompvleisvreter se enkel en gee dit aan haar.
Eienaardig genoeg het nie een van die ander reuse
van die rumoer wakker geword nie. "As jy nie baie slaap, slaap jy twee maal diep," verduidelik die GSR.
Die Hoof van die Leër en die Hoof van die Lugmag beweeg nou weer vorentoe in hulle Jeep. "Haar Majes teit sal baie in haar skik wees met my," sê die Hoof van die Leër. "Ek sal beslis 'n nuwe dekorasie vir hierdie heldedaad kry. Wat maak ons nou?"
"Ons nou ry na my grot en kry my droomflesse," sê die GSR.
"Ons kan nie tyd mors met sulke onbenullighede nie," sê die Hoof van die Leër. ,
"Dis Haar Majesteit se bevel!" sê Sophie. Sy sit nou weer op die GSR se hand.
Dus ry die nege Jeeps in gelid na die GSR se grot en een vir een word die flesse opgelaai. Daar is vyftigduisend flesse - meer as vyfduisend per Jeep en dit neem
'n voile uur om die taak af te handel.
Terwyl die soldate die flesse met die drome oplaai, verdwyn Sophie en die GSR oor die berg op 'n geheime sending. Toe hulle terugkom, het die GSR 'n sak so groot soos 'n kleinerige huis oor sy skouer.
"Wat het jy daar?" wil die Hoof van die Leër weet.
"Van kieskeurigheid is die tronk vol," sê die GSR en draai sy rug op die lawwe vent.
Toe hy tevrede is dat al die flesse veilig op die Jeeps
is, sê hy: "Nou terug na pelliehopters en vreesvolle reuse oplaai."
Die Jeeps ry terug na die helikopters waar die vyftigduisend droomflesse fles vir fles versigtig oorgepak word. Dit gedaan, klim die soldate almal in. Die GSR en Sophie bly op die grond staan. Toe stap hulle terug na waar die reuse vasgebind lê.
Dit was 'n pragtige gesig: al nege groot helikopters wat laag oor die vasgebinde reuse vlieg, wat nou een vir een wakker word van die

lawaai van die enjins. En die mooiste van alles was om te sien hoe die nege aaklige reuse krul en draai en spartel om los te kom uit die toue en kettings.

“Ek befoefaai!” bulder die Hompvleisvreter. “Ek bewerwel!” skree die Kindkouer.

“Ek bekrakel!” tjank die Beenknerser. “Ek getjitser!” huil die Manneklemmer. “Ek gesoesie!” kla die Sousdrupper.

“Ek gemoesel!” kreun die Vrouekloueer. “Ek gevrotsel!” kerm die Afvalvreter. “Ek gesloeper!” ween die Bloedslurper. “Ek gekoetsel!” steun die Jagterslagter.

Die nege helikopters kies elkeen ’n reus en hang direk bokant sy prooi. Baie sterk staalkabels met hake onderaan word stadig van die voorkant en die agterkant van die helikopter afgelaat. Die GSR heg gou die hake aan die kettings en toue waarmee die reuse vasgemaak is - een haak by die bene en een naby die arms. Stadig, baie stadig word die reuse in die lug opgehys. Hulle brul en bulder maar hulle is hulpeloos.

Met Sophie weer eens gemaklik in sy oor weggesteek, jaag die GSR terug Engeland toe, met die helikopters agterna.

Dit was ’n rare gesig. Stel julle voor - nege helikopters wiekend deur die lug, elkeen met ’n vasgebinde reus wat onder hom hang. Die reuse het natuurlik nie gedink dis snaaks nie! Eintlik het hulle glad nie daarvan gehou nie! Hulle getjank en gebulder was gelukkig skaars hoorbaar bo die gebrul van die enjins.

Toe dit skemer word, skakel die helikopters hulle
soekligte aan om die Groot Sagmoedige Reus te kan volg. Hulle vlieg dwarsdeur die nag en kom in Engeland aan net toe die dag rooi begin breek.

23. FEEDING TIME

While the giants were being captured, a tremendous bustle and hustle was going on back home in England. Every earth-digger and mechanical contrivance in the country had been mobilized to dig the colossal hole in which the nine giants were to be permanently imprisoned.

Ten thousand men and ten thousand machines worked ceaselessly through the night under powerful arc-lights, and the massive task was completed only just in time.

The hole itself was about twice the size of a football field and five hundred feet deep. The walls were perpendicular and engineers had calculated that there was no way a giant could escape once he was put in. Even if all nine giants were to stand on each other's shoulders, the topmost giant would still be some fifty feet from the top of the hole.

The nine giant-carrying helicopters hovered over the massive pit. The giants, one by one, were lowered to the floor. But they were still trussed up and now came the tricky business of releasing them from their bonds. Nobody wanted to go down and do this because the moment a giant was freed, he would be sure to turn on the wretched person who had freed him and gobble him up.

As usual, the BFG had the answer. 'I has told you before,' he said, 'giants is never eating giants, so I is going down and I shall untie them myself before you can say rack jobinson.'

With thousands of fascinated spectators, including the Queen, peering down into the pit, the BFG was lowered on a rope. One by one, he released the giants. They stood up, stretched their stiffened limbs and started leaping about in fury.

'Why is they putting us down here in this grobsludging hole?' they shouted at the BFG.

'Because you is guzzling human beans,' the BFG answered. 'I is always warning you not to do it and you is never taking the titchiest bit of notice.'

'In that case,' the Fleshlumpeater bellowed, 'I think we is guzzling you instead!'

The BFG grabbed the dangling rope and was hoisted out of the pit just in time.

The great bulging sack he had brought back with him from Giant Country lay at the top of the pit.

'What's in there?' the Queen asked him.

The BFG put an arm into the sack and pulled out a gigantic black and white striped object the size of a man.

‘Snozzcumbers!’ he cried. ‘This is the repulsant snozzcumber, Majester, and that is all we is going to give these disgustive giants from now on!’

‘May I taste it?’ the Queen asked.

‘Don’t, Majester, don’t!’ cried the BFG. ‘It is tasting of trogfilth and pigsquibble!’ With that he tossed the snozzcumber down to the giants below. ‘There’s your supper!’ he shouted. ‘Have a munch on that!’ He fished out more snozzcumbers from the sack and threw them down. The giants below howled and cursed. The BFG laughed. ‘It serves them right left and centre!’ he said.

‘What will we feed them on when the snozzcumbers are all used up?’ the Queen asked him.

‘They is never being used up, Majester,’ the BFG answered, smiling. ‘I is also bringing in this sack a whole bungle of snozzcumber plants which I is giving, with your permission, to the royal gardener to put in the soil. Then we is having an everlasting supply of this repulsant food to feed these thirstbloody giants on.’

‘What a clever fellow you are,’ the Queen said. ‘You are not very well educated but you are really nobody’s fool, I can see that.’

23. Snorkommertyd

Terwyl die reuse-jag plaasvind, is daar in Engeland ’n groot gewerskaf aan die gang. So te sê elke laaigraaf en meganiese grondverskuiwer in die land word gemobili-seer om ’n kolossale gat te grawe waarin nege enorme reuse permanent gehuisves kan word.
Tienduisend arbeiders en tienduisend masjiene werk dwarsdeur die nag om die werk betyds te voltooi.
Die gat self is ongeveer twee keer so wyd soos ’n rug by veld en honderd en negentig meter diep. Die kante loop regaf en die ingenieurs het die put só beplan dat geen reus daaruit sal kan ontsnap nie. A1 sou al nege reuse op mekaar se skouers staan, sal hulle nog meer as twintig meter van bo af wees.
Die nege helikopters met die reuse onderaan vlieg
laag oor die massiewe put. Die reuse word een vir een in die put neergelaat. Maar hulle is natuurlik nog steeds vasgemaak en nou kom die moeilikste deel: hoe om hul le los te kry.
Niemand is gewillig om af te gaan en die taak te ver—
rig nie, want sodra ’n reus se hande los is, sal hy gryp na die persoon wat hom bevry het.
Soos gewoonlik het die GSR die antwoord. “Ek het
gesê,” verklaar hy, “reuse nie reuse vreet. So ek gaan af om hulle te los voor julle ’n oog kan klap.”
Duisende nuuskierige toeskouers, insluitende die Koningin, drom om die put saam om te sien hoe die GSR die ander reuse gaan losmaak. Hulle laat hom met toue afsak. Hy maak die reuse een vir een los. Hulle
staan stadig op, rek hulle stywe litte en spring rond van woede.
“Hoekom ons in haglige hool?” skree hulle.
“Want julle gopsel mensdommes,” antwoord die GSR. “Ek het julle drie, twee keer gewaarsku, maar julle oorgate toe. Nou kry loontjie sy boontjie.”
“Dan sal ons jóú opgopsel!”
Net betyds gryp die GSR die toue, en hy word vin
nig opgehys.
Die groot sak wat hy van Reuseland saamgebring het, lê langs die put.
“Wat is daarin?” vra die Koningin belangstellend.
“Snorkommers,” sê hy. “Dit viesaaklige snorkom
mers, Majestator. Dit nou gopselkos vir reuse.” “Mag ek proe?” vra die Koningin.
“Nee, Majestator,” sê die GSR. “Dit proesel van varkvelle en sjiesiefoefies.” Met daardie woorde gooi hy

’n paar snorkommers in die put af.
“Daar julle gopselgoed!” skree hy. “Gopsel lekker!” Hy haal nog ’n paar snorkommers uit die sak en gooi hulle ook af. Die reuse raas en skree en vloek. Die GSR lag net en sê: “Dis hulle verdoonde loon, nê, my Kroon?” en knipoog vir die Koningin.
“Maar waarmee gaan ons hulle voer as hierdie klomp gedaan is?” vra die Koningin.
“Snorkommers sal nie opraak, Majestator,” sê hy en
glimlag. “Ek bring hele sak plantjies van snorkommers. As Majestator sê ja, kan ons snorkommers in tuin plant vir viesaaklige foeibare reuse se gopselkos.”
“Wat ’n slim kêrel is jy!” sê die Koningin. “Jy mag miskien nie veel geleerdheid hê nie, maar jy is nie onder ’n kalkoen uitgebroei nie, dis nou maar klaar.”

24. THE AUTHOR

Every country in the world that had in the past been visited by the foul man-eating giants sent telegrams of congratulations and thanks to the BFG and to Sophie. Kings and Presidents and Prime Ministers and Rulers of every kind showered the enormous giant and the little girl with compliments and thank-yous, as well as all sorts of medals and presents.

The Ruler of India sent the BFG a magnificent elephant, the very thing he had been wishing for all his life.

The King of Arabia sent them a camel each.

The Lama of Tibet sent them a llama each.

Wellington sent them one hundred pairs of wellies each.

Panama sent them beautiful hats.

The King of Sweden sent them a barrelful of sweet and sour pork.

Jersey sent them pullovers.

There was no end to the gratitude of the world.

The Queen herself gave orders that a special house with tremendous high ceilings and enormous doors should immediately be built in Windsor Great Park, next to her own castle, for the BFG to live in. And a

pretty little cottage was put up next door for Sophie. The BFG's house was to have a special dream-storing room with hundreds of shelves in it where he could put his beloved bottles. What is more, he was given the title of The Royal Dream-Blower. He was allowed to go galloping off to any place in England on any night of the year to blow his splendid phizzwizards in through the windows to sleeping children. And letters poured into his house by the million from children begging him to pay them a visit.

Meanwhile, tourists from all over the globe came flocking to gaze down in wonder at the nine horrendous man-eating giants in the great pit. They came especially at feeding-time, when the snozzcumbers were being thrown down to them by the keeper, and it was a pleasure to listen to the howls and growls of horror coming up from the pit as the giants began to chew upon the filthiest-tasting vegetable on earth.

There was only one disaster. Three silly men who had drunk too much beer for lunch decided to climb over the high fence surrounding the pit, and of course they fell in. There were yells of delight from the giants below, followed by the crunching of bones. The head keeper immediately put up a big notice on the fence saying, IT IS FORBIDDEN TO FEED THE GIANTS. And after that, there were no more disasters.

The BFG expressed a wish to learn how to speak properly, and Sophie herself, who loved him as she would a father, volunteered to give him lessons every day. She even taught him how to spell and to
write sentences, and he turned out to be a splendid intelligent pupil. In his spare time, he read books. He became a tremendous reader. He read all of Charles Dickens (whom he no longer called Dahl's Chickens), and all of Shakespeare and literally thousands of other books. He also started to write essays about his own past life. When Sophie read some of them, she said, 'These are very good. I think perhaps one day you could become a real writer.'

'Oh, I would love that!' cried the BFG. 'Do you think I could?'

'I know you could,' Sophie said. 'Why don't you start by writing a book about you and me?'

'Very well,' the BFG said. 'I'll give it a try.'

So he did. He worked hard on it and in the end he completed it. Rather shyly, he showed it to the Queen. The Queen read it aloud to her grandchildren. Then the Queen said, 'I think we ought to get this book printed properly and published so that other children can read it.' This was arranged, but because the BFG was a very modest giant, he wouldn't put his own name on it. He used somebody else's name instead.

But where, you might ask, is this book that the BFG wrote?

It's right here. You've just finished reading it.

24. Die skrywer

Elke land in die wêreld wat al van die aaklige monsters besoek ontvang het, stuur telegramme van gelukswen-sing aan die Groot Sagmoedige Reus en aan Sophie. Konings en Presidente en Eerste Ministers en allerlei soorte heersers bied dankies en komplimente en dekorasies en medaljes aan die enorme reus en sy klein vriendinnetjie.
Die Heerser van Indië stuur vir die GSR 'n yslike olifant - presies so een soos hy sy hele lewe lank al be-geer.
Die Koning van Arabië stuur vir elkeen 'n kameel. Van die Lama van Tibet ontvang elkeen 'n lama. Afrika se geskenk is natuurlik Afrikanerbeeste.
'n Enorme sweedseleerbaadjie vir die GSR en 'n fraai klein jassie vir Sophie kom van die Koning van Swede.
Lapland pos vir hulle die mooiste, sagste materiaal. En van Turkye kry hulle natuurlik turksvye!
Soveel dank het geen mens nog ooit ontvang nie.
Die Koningin self beveel dat daar dadelik vir die GSR 'n spesiale huis met baie hoë plafonne en yslike deure in Windsor-park, net langs haar eie paleis, gebou word. En 'n fraai klein kothuisie vir Sophie word daar-naas opgerig. Die GSR se huis het 'n spesiale droom-stoorkamer met honderde rakke waarop hy sy drome kan uitstal. En verder ontvang hy van die Koningin 'n baie spesiale titel: die Koninklike Droomblaser. Hy word toegelaat om enige aand, waar ook al, drome deur kinders se vensters te blaas. En honderde briewe van kinders, wat hom smeek om hulle tog te besoek, stroom daagliks in.
Intussen lok die nege aaklige mensvretende reuse in
die put duisende besoekers van dwarsoor die wêreld. Hulle kom veral op tye wanneer die reuse met snorkommers gevoer word. Dit gee die toeskouers groot plesier om die gekreun en gesteun en gekla en gebrul van die reuse te hoor as hulle begin kou aan die nare, vies like snorkommers.
Daar was net één ongeluk. Drie verspotte mans wat een middag te veel bier gedrink het, het besluit om oor die put se omheining te klim. Natuurlik het hulle inge-val. Daar was luide krete van blydskap, gevolg deur 'n gekners van tande en gelcraak van bene. Dadelik het die opsigter 'n kennisgewing opgerig: voer van reuse verbode . Daarna het geen verdere ongelukke plaasge-vind nie.
Die GSR het gevra om ordentlik te leer praat en
Sophie, wat vir hom lief geword het soos vir 'n eie pa, het aangebied om hom elke dag te help. Sy het hom selfs geleer spel en hoe om mooi sinne'te skrywe,. Hy was 'n besonder intelligente leerling. In sy vrye

tyd het hy gelees. Hy het werklik ywerig gelees. Hy het al Charles Dickens se boeke lees (en hy noem hom nie meer Dahl's Chickens nie). Later het hy al Shakespeare se werke uit sy kop geken, asook honderde ander boeke. Hy het ook opstelle begin skryf, onder andere oor sy vroeëre lewe. Nadat Sophie hulle gelees het, sê sy: "Hulle is regtig baie goed. Ek dink jy kan miskien nog eendag 'n regte skrywer word."

"O, dit wonderlik!" sê die GSR opgewonde. "Dink
jy regtig so?"

"Ja," sê Sophie. "Hoekom begin jy nie deur 'n boek oor ons twee te skrywe nie?"

"Top! Ek perbeer."

En hy het. Hy het baie hard daaraan gewerk en dit uiteindelik voltooi. Skaam-skaam wys hy dit vir die Koningin. Die Koningin lees dit vir haar kleinkinders voor. Toe sê sy: "Ek dink ons moet hierdie boek publi-seer sodat ander kinders dit ook kan lees."

So is dit dan gereël, maar omdat die GSR 'n baie be—
skeie soort reus is, wou hy dit nie onder sy eie naam laat uitgee nie. Hy kies toe 'n skuilnaam.

Maar waar, vra jy straks, is die boek wat die GSR geskrywe het? Reg onder jou oe.

Jy het hom so pas klaar gelees.